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GRAZIELLA

BY

A DE LAMARTINE



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TALES FROM FOREIGN LANDS.

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I.

Memories: A Story of German Love. Translated from the German of MAX MÜLLER, by GEO. P. UPTON. 16mo, 173 pages, gilt top.

II.

Graziella: A Story of Italian Love. Translated from the French of A. DE LAMARTINE, by JAMES B. RUNNION. 16mo, 235 pages, gilt top.

III.

Marie: A Story of Russian Love. From the Russian of ALEXANDER PUSHKIN, by MARIE H. DE ZILLINSKA. 16mo, 210 pages, gilt top.

IV.

Madeleine: A Story of French Love. Translated from the French of JULES SANDAUR, by FRANK CHARLES. 16mo, 244 pages, gilt top.

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Cousin Phillis: A Story of English Love. By MRS. GASKELL. 16mo, 222 pages, gilt top.

GRAZIELLA:

A STORY OF ITALIAN LOVE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

A. DE LAMARTINE,

BY

JAMES B. RUNNION.



CHICAGO:

A. C. McCLURG & COMPANY.

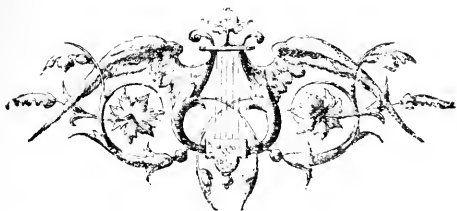
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

THE story of Graziella is a leaf torn from the personal memoirs of the famous French historian, poet and orator who wrote it,—brightened by his smiles and moistened with his tears. Had it not been for Graziella, “*Les Confidences*” of Lamartine might never have been published. Many years after this Italian romance of his youth—as late as 1843—Lamartine went into retreat on the island of Ischia to write his “*History of the Girondists.*” He was in sight of the isle of Procida where Graziella had lived and he had loved, and his hours of recreation were passed under the shade of a lemon tree, writing out the recollections of this charming episode. It was while he was thus engaged one day, that his friend, Eugène Pelletan, surprised him with a

visit. Pelletan was curious to know what Lamartine was doing, and the latter, on the impulse, read him a few pages from his journal. Pelletan was much moved at the recital, and, when he returned to Paris, told a publisher of that city he might make his fortune if he could secure these recollections of Lamartine's youth. The following Autumn, when Lamartine had returned home, he received a letter from the publisher offering him any price he would name for his journal. Though the improvident author was then in embarrassed circumstances, he declined the offer. Some years before, he had purchased the estate at Milly on borrowed money, that he might die in the old homestead. He was now forced to part with a portion of it. A week after the first offer for the Recollections, came another letter from Paris importuning their publication. The second letter was received at the moment a notary was drawing the deed for the sale of the Milly estate; Lamartine was in a humor to accept any alternative rather than part with the

house hallowed by so many sacred associations. He seized the deed from the table, tore it in fragments, and wrote to the Paris publisher: "I accept."

Omitting a brief sojourn in Rome, this little volume includes all of Lamartine's first visit to Italy from the time he left his home at Milly,— a hamlet nestling in the valley of the Saône, on the road from Macon to the old abbey of Cluny, where Abelard died. He was traveling with a relative who was called to Leghorn on business, and it was intended that he should return home from there; but his strong desire to see Rome and Naples induced him to write to his father for permission to visit those cities. He was then but eighteen years old. Having written, he resolved to preclude disobedience by going without waiting for a reply. "If the refusal comes," he said, "it will come too late. I shall be reprimanded, but I shall be forgiven; I shall return, but I shall have seen." His impressions of Rome were vivid and his descriptions singularly

picturesque, but as they are not pertinent to the story of Graziella they are omitted, thus offering alone what he has himself called "that mournful and fascinating presentiment of love."

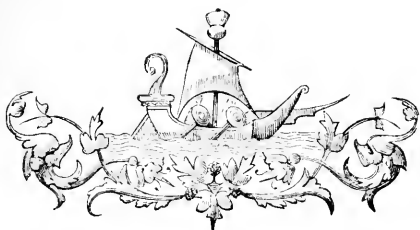
J. B. R.

CHICAGO, OCT. 29, 1875.



GRAZIELLA.





GRAZIELLA.

PART FIRST.

I.

I ARRIVED at Naples on the first of April. A few days later I was joined by a young man of about my own age, to whom I had attached myself at college with the friendship of a brother. His name was Aymond de Virieu. His life and mine were so peculiarly associated from his birth to his death, that one forms a part of the other, and I speak of him almost everywhere I have occasion to speak of myself.

At Naples I led nearly the same contemplative life as in Rome at the house of the old painter of the Piazza di Spagna. Only, instead of pass-

ing my days in wandering among the relics of antiquity, I passed them in wandering along the shore, or upon the waves of the Gulf of Naples. In the evening I returned to the old convent, where, thanks to the hospitality of my mother's relative, I occupied a little cell touching the roof, the balcony of which, decorated with flower-pots and creeping vines, looked out upon the sea, upon Mount Vesuvius, Castellamare and Sorrento.

When the morning horizon was clear, I could see the white house that belonged to Tasso glistening in the distance, like a swan's nest hanging from the height of a rocky cliff, perpendicularly cut by the waves of the sea. This sight ravished me. The light of that house penetrated to the very depths of my soul. It was like a ray of glory that shone from afar upon my youth and my darkness. I revived in my mind that heroic episode in the life of the great man, when, coming from prison, persecuted by the envy of the little and the calumny of

the great, mocked even unto his genius—his only fortune—he returned to Sorrento to seek rest, kindness, or even pity; and when, disguised as a beggar, he presented himself to his sister to touch her heart and see if she, at least, would recognize the man whom she had once loved so much.

“She recognizes him at once,” says his biographer, “in spite of his sickly pallor, his whitened beard, and his ragged mantle. She throws herself into his arms with more tenderness and sympathy than if she had recognized her brother in the glittering dress of a courtier of Ferrara. Her voice is long stifled with sobs; she presses her brother to her heart. She washes his feet, and has a feast prepared for him. But neither the one nor the other could eat of a single dish that was served, so full of tears were their hearts; and they passed the day in weeping, saying nothing, looking out upon the sea, and recalling the happy hours of their childhood.”

II.

It was in the beginning of the Summer, at a time when the Gulf of Naples, lined by its hills, its white houses, and its rocks, embroidered with creeping vines, and encircling a sea bluer than the heavens above, resembles a great vase of *vert antique* whitened with foam, whose brim and handles are festooned with ivy-leaves and branches. It was the season when the fishermen of Posilippo, who hang their cabins over the rocks and stretch their nets out upon the sandy beach, push off from the shore during the night in perfect confidence, and go out two or three leagues into the sea to fish,—as far as the promontories of Capri, Procida, Ischia, and the Gulf of Gaëta.

Some carry with them torches made of resin, which they light in order to deceive the fish. The fish comes to the top of the water, believing it to be the break of day. A child, crouched upon the prow of the boat, inclines the burning

torch toward the water, while the fisherman, whose eye penetrates to the very bottom of the gulf, searches for his prey and catches it in the net. These lights, red as the fire of a furnace, are reflected in long, undulating waves on the surface of the sea, like the last faint glimmerings of the moon. The undulation follows the movement of the billows and prolongs the glare from wave to wave, reflected from one to the other.

III.

My friend and I passed whole hours at a time, seated on the shoals or among the damp ruins of Queen Jeanne's palace, in watching these picturesque lights and in envying the erratic and careless life of these poor fishermen.

A few months' residence in Naples and constant association with the common people, whom we met in our daily excursions to the country and upon the sea, enabled us to familiarize ourselves with their emphatic yet sweet-sounding

language, in which look and gesture take as prominent a part as the word itself. Naturally inclined to be philosophers, and tired of the vain vicissitudes of life before knowing what they were, we often regarded with envious feelings those happy lazzaroni, with whom the beach and the quays of Naples were crowded; who whiled away the day under the shade of their little barks on the sand, listening to the improvised verses of the wandering minstrels, and dancing the *tarentella* in the evening with the young girls of their station under some arbor along the sea-shore. We understood their customs, their habits and their character much better than those of fine society, in which, indeed, we never mingled. This life suited us, and quieted that feverish action of the soul, which occupies the imagination of young men uselessly before the hour their destiny calls upon them to think or act.

My friend was twenty years old; I was only eighteen; so we were both of an age when dreams are confused with realities. We resolved

to form a closer acquaintance with these fishermen, and, in their company, embark for a few days on the same life. To pass these mild, brilliant nights under the sail, in the rocking cradle of the billows and under a canopy of stars, seemed to us one of the most mysterious luxuries of nature, which it was essential for us to penetrate, if for no other reason than to relate our experience.

Free, and obliged to render account to no one of our actions or of our absence, we put into execution on the following morning that which we had planned in the evening. In walking over the beach of Margellina, which extends out under the tomb of Virgil at the foot of Mount Posilippo, and where the fishermen of Naples draw their boats on the sand to repair their nets, we encountered an old fellow who was still robust. He was putting away his fishing tackle in a long boat, painted in glittering colors, and adorned at the stern with a little carved image of St. Francis. A boy, about twelve years of

age, his only oarsman, came up at this moment, bringing with him two loaves of bread, a cheese with a hard skin and as bright as the pebbles that covered the shore, some figs, and an earthen jug filled with water.

The appearance of the old man and child attracted us. We engaged in conversation. The fisherman began to laugh when we proposed that he should take us to sea with him, and that we should act as oarsmen.

“Your hands are scarcely hard enough to handle the oar,” said he; “those white fingers were made to clasp the pen, and not wood. It would be a shame to harden them at sea.”

“We are young,” answered my friend, “and we wish to try all callings before finally choosing one. Yours pleases us, for it requires one to be upon the sea and under the sky.”

“You are right,” said the old boatman. “It is a trade that makes the heart contented and the soul confident in the protection of the saints. The fisherman is under the immediate charge of

heaven. Man knows not whence comes the wind or the wave. The file and the plane are in the hand of the workman, riches and favor are in the hand of the king, but the boat is in the hand of God."

This holy philosophy of the *barcarole* confirmed our intention of embarking with him. After a long refusal he consented to it. We agreed that each of us should give him two carlines a day to pay him for our apprenticeship and food.

Having settled upon the terms, he sent his boy back to Margellina to procure a new supply of bread, wine, dry cheese and fruits. Toward the close of the day we assisted him in putting the boat afloat, and then pushed off into the open sea.

IV.

The first night was charming. The sea was as calm as one of the little lakes set down among the mountains of Switzerland. The fur-

ther we sailed from the coast the more numerous were the long tongues of fire that issued out of the windows of the palaces, and shot from the quays of Naples, and were at last absorbed by the dark line of the horizon. The lighthouse alone indicated the shore. But they paled before the column of fire springing from the crater of Mount Vesuvius. While the fisherman threw out and drew in his net, and the boy, half sleeping, permitted his torch to vacillate from side to side, we gave a slight impulse to the movement of the boat from time to time, and listened with delight to the harmonious sound of the water dripping from our oars into the sea, like pearls into a great basin of silver.

We had long since doubled the point of Posilippo, crossed the gulf of Pozzuoli and that of Baia, and passed through the channel of the gulf of Gaëta between the Cape Miseno and the Isle of Procida. We were in the open sea when sleep overtook us. We laid ourselves down on the seat beside the child.

The fisherman had stretched over us, we found on awaking, the heavy sail that lay in the bottom of the boat. We had fallen asleep between two billows, cradled by a sea that scarcely moved the mast. Day had broken before we awoke.

A bright sun decorated the sea with ribbons of fire and shone upon the white houses on a coast unknown to us. A light breeze, that came from the shore, agitated the sail above us and drove us gently from rock to rock, from one projection to another. It was the perpendicular and ragged coast of the island of Ischia, which I was destined afterwards to learn and to love. Seeing this island for the first time, it seemed to me as though it were swimming in light, rising from the sea, losing itself in the blue sky,—born like the dream of a poet in the light sleep of a summer night.

V.

The island of Ischia, which divides the Gulf of Gaëta from the Gulf of Naples, and which is separated from the island of Procida only by a

narrow channel, is but a perpendicular peak, the white summit, battered by thunder-storms, plunging its sharp teeth into the sky. Its steep ascents, cut into by glens, ravines and torrent-beds, are covered from the top to the bottom with horse-chestnut trees of a dark green color. Its table-land, nearest to the sea, and inclining over the waves, is filled with thatched houses, rural cottages and little villages, half concealed within the grape-vines that surround them. Each of these villages has its "marine," for so they call the harbor with its fleet of boats belonging to the fishermen of the island, among which we found a few masts that carry the lateen sail. The mast-heads touch the trees and vines of the coast.

There is not one of these houses,—hanging from a declivity of the mountain, hidden at the bottom of a ravine, perched on a table-rock, projecting on one of the peaks, leaning against a great horse-chestnut tree, shaded by a grove of pines, surrounded by arbors and festooned with

hanging grapes,—that might not be the ideal home of a poet or a lover.

Our eyes did not weary with gazing on this scene. The coast abounded in fish. The fisherman made a good night of it. We ran ashore in one of the little coves to get water from a neighboring spring, and to rest ourselves on the rocks. We returned to Naples by the light of the setting sun, reclining upon the benches of the boat. A square sail fixed across a small mast at the prow—the boy holding the rope—was sufficient to carry us beyond the promontories of Procida and Cape Miseno, and to make the sea foam under the sharp speed of our bark.

The old fisherman and his boy, with our assistance, drew the boat on the sand and carried the baskets filled with fish into the cellar of a little house, where they lived, under the rocks of Margellina.

VI.

For several days we gayly resumed our newly-chosen vocation. We explored in turn all parts

of the Gulf of Naples. We visited the Island of Capri, where superstition still drives away the shade of Tiberias; Cumæ and its temples, buried under the thick foliage of bay-trees and wild fig-trees; Baïa and its deserted places that seem to have grown old and gray like the Romans whose youth and pleasures they formerly witnessed; Portici and Pompeii, smiling under the lava and ashes of Vesuvius; Castellamare, with its great black forests of laurel and wild chestnut trees, which, reflecting themselves in the sea, give the ever-murmuring waves a tint of dark green. The old boatman had acquaintances everywhere among the families of fishermen like himself, by whom we were received with generous hospitality when the sea was so heavy as to prevent us from returning to Naples.

During two whole months we never once put our feet into an inn. We lived in the open air with the people, and led the frugal life of the people. We had made ourselves their companions in order to be in closer communion with

nature. We almost wore their dress. We spoke their language, and the simplicity of their habits seemed to imbue our spirits with the innocence of their thoughts.

But this change in our condition did not cost us much sacrifice, after all. Both of us having been brought up in the country during the storms of the revolution that had driven our families from their homes, we had in childhood led much the life of the peasant. My friend had been in the mountains of Grésivaudan, with a nurse who took him from his mother's arms, when the latter went to prison. I had lived among the hills of Macon, in a little farm-house, where my father and mother had gathered together their threatened brood. There are no other differences between the shepherd or laborer of our mountains and the fisherman of the Gulf of Naples than those of location, language and calling. The furrow or the wave inspires with the same thoughts the man who tills the ground and the man who toils upon the sea. Nature speaks the same language to all those

who receive nourishment from her bosom, whether it be on the mountain or on the ocean.

We experienced all this. In company with the simplest kind of men, we did not find ourselves out of place. The same instincts form a relationship between men. The very monotony of this life pleased us while it quieted us. We looked forward with sorrow to the end of Summer and the approach of Autumn and Winter, when we should be obliged to return to our native country. Our people, already uneasy about our welfare, began to recall us. We put off as far as possible all thought of going away, and delighted in picturing to ourselves that this life would have no end.

VII.

But September soon came with its rain-storms and thunder-storms. The sea lost its placid appearance. Our calling was a more laborious one and sometimes a more dangerous one. The winds were higher and the waves foamed, often

washing over us in their tumult. We had bought us, on the quay, a couple of cloaks made of a coarse brown stuff, such as the sailors and *lazzaroni* of Naples throw over their shoulders during Winter. The large sleeves of these cloaks hang down, exposing the bare arms. The hood, allowed to flutter at the back or drawn down over the forehead, according to the weather, protects the head of the mariner from the rain and cold, or admits the breeze and the rays of the sun to play among his hair.

One day we left Margellina with a sea the surface of which was as smooth as oil and disturbed by no breath of the wind, to go to the coast of Cumæ, whither the fish are driven by the currents at this season of the year. But the dense mist of the morning warned us that we might expect a heavy wind before evening. We hoped, however, to avoid it by doubling the Cape Miseno before the dull and sleeping sea should be awakened.

There was an abundance of fish. We could

not resist the temptation of throwing out the nets a few times more. The wind surprised us. It came from Epomeo, an immense mountain that towers above Ischia, and with the noise and impetuosity of the mountain itself rolling into the sea. First it smoothed out all the liquid surface that surrounded us as the iron harrow goes over the ground and levels the furrows. Then the wave, recovering from the attack, angrily aroused itself, and in a few minutes had attained such a height that, on either side, it concealed from our view the main coast and the islands.

We were about equally distant from the main shore and the island of Ischia, and nearly in the middle of the channel that divides Cape Miseno from the Greek island of Procida. There was but one course left for us to take: to row manfully into the channel, and, if we succeeded in getting through it, to throw ourselves at the left into the gulf of Baïa, and in this way find shelter in its quieter waters.

The old fisherman did not hesitate a moment.

From the top of an immense wave, where the balance of the boat held us an instant in a whirlpool of foam, he threw a hasty glance around as a man lost in a forest might climb to the top of a tree to seek his way; then, seizing the rudder, he cried out:

“To your oars, children! We must reach the cape before the wind can. If it gets ahead of us we are lost.”

We obeyed as the body obeys its instincts.

With our eyes fixed upon his eyes in order the more rapidly to catch the directions given, we bent upon our oars; now painfully clambering up the side of a swelling wave, now precipitated with the foam of a falling wave, we endeavored to avoid the shock by opposing the resistance of our oars in the water. Eight or ten of these great waves, growing larger and larger, threw us into the narrowest part of the channel. But the wind had outstripped us, as the pilot had feared, and rushing between the cape and the extreme point of the island, it had acquired such force

that it lifted the sea with the deep rumbling noise of a furious lava, and the waves, not finding room enough to fly before the storm that drove them, heaped themselves upon each other, fell back again, rushed and scattered like a mad sea; vainly seeking escape in the channel, they dashed against the sharp rocks of the cape, and there towered above in a grand column of foam, the spray from which was thrown far enough to pour down upon us.

VIII.

To attempt to make this passage with a boat as frail as ours, which one of those foaming waves might have filled and engulfed, would have been foolhardy. The fisherman gave a look, which I shall never forget, at the cape, lighted up by one of these columns of glistening foam; then, piously making the sign of the cross, he said to us:

“To pass it is impossible; to return into the open sea would be still more so. There is but

one thing left for us to do: we must make a landing at Procida or perish."

Novices as we were in the practices of the sea, we perceived at once the difficulties that we would encounter in attempting to make this landing during a storm. In directing us toward the cape, the wind took our boat in the rear and drove us before it. We went with the sea which was flying with us, and rose and fell with the waves that carried us. In this way there was at least not so much probability of our being buried in the abysses which the waves hollowed out. But in order to reach the coast of Procida, where we could see the evening lights shining at our right, it was necessary to take the waves obliquely and, as it were, glide through the valleys made by them, presenting the sides of our boat to the billows and its thin boards to the wind. Necessity, however, gave us no time to hesitate. The fisherman, making us a sign to lift the oars, took advantage of the interval between the falling of one wave and the rising of another to turn the

boat about. We took our course to Procida and wandered along like a bit of sea-weed tossed from one wave to another wave, or which one billow snatches from another billow.

IX.

We made but slow work of it. The shades of night were falling. The spray, the foam, the clouds that the winds turned into irregular showers, only served to increase the gloom. The old man had ordered the boy to light one of his torches, partly for the purpose of giving him some light by which to direct his movements in the depth of the sea, and partly to inform the sailors of Procida that a boat was in danger and to call upon them — not for assistance, which would have been impossible — but for their prayers.

It was a sublime and terrible thing to see this poor boy, clinging with one hand to the light mast that ran up from the bow of the boat, and with the other lifting the torch of red fire far above his head, the flame and the smoke brushed

back by the wind until they scorched his hands and hair. This fluttering light, now appearing at the top of a great wave and again disappearing in its depth, now about to go out and then regaining all its brilliancy, was symbolic of the four human souls that struggled between life and death during the anguish of that awful night.

X.

Three hours, each minute of which had the duration of the thought that measured it, passed in this way. The moon rose, and, as usual, the wind rose more furiously with it. If we had carried an inch of canvas we would have capsized twenty times before this. Although the low sides of the boat exposed but little surface to the hurricane, there were moments when it seemed as though the wind would tear our keel from out the water, and when it drove the bark around and about as it would a dry leaf that had fallen from a tree.

A great deal of water poured in upon us. We

could not bail it out as fast as it came in. There were times when we could feel the planks sink down under us like a coffin that is lowered into the grave. The weight of the water rendered the boat more unmanageable, and might at any time have kept it too long in lifting itself out of the space between two waves. A single moment of such delay and we would have been lost.

The old man, with tears in his eyes and without the power of speaking, made us a sign to throw everything into the sea that encumbered the bottom of the boat. The vessels of fresh water, the baskets of fish, the two large sails, the iron anchor, the ropes, even the heavier clothes and our two cloaks of thick wool, dripping with water,—all were thrown overboard. The poor sailor looked for a moment to see his whole fortune submerged; the boat lifted itself again and ran lightly on the crest of a wave, like a charger relieved of his burden.

Imperceptibly we gained a milder sea, protected somewhat by the western point of Procida.

The wind went down a little; the flame of the torch was more steady; the moon opened a great blue vista in the sky; the waves, stretching out and leveling, ceased to foam above our heads. Gradually the waves became shorter and milder, almost as in a quiet bay, and the black shade of the promontory of Procida cut the horizon just before us. We were in the waters nearly opposite the center of the island.

XI.

The sea was still too high to attempt a landing at this point, where there was a port. There only remained the sides of the islands and the quicksands of the shore.

“There is no longer any occasion for fear, children,” said the old fisherman, as he recognized the land by the light of the torch; “the Madonna has saved us. We will reach the shore in safety, and sleep to-night in my house.”

We believed that the man had lost his senses, for we knew of no other house belonging to him

than the little cellar at Margellina, and to return to that before the night was over, we would have been obliged to enter the channel again, double the cape, and confront the roaring sea from which we had just escaped.

But he smiled at our astonishment, and, guessing our thoughts from our eyes, he continued:

“Do not fear, I tell you; we shall arrive at my house to-night, and not another wave shall moisten your clothes.”

He then explained to us that he came from Procida; that he still owned, on this side of the island, the cabin and garden left by his father, and that, at this very moment, his aged wife, with her grand-daughter, a sister of Beppino's, who was our ship boy, and two other grandchildren, were at his house to dry figs and gather grapes which they sold in Naples.

“Only a few more strokes of the oar,” he added, “and we shall drink spring water which is clearer than the wine of Ischia.”

These words infused new courage into our

hearts. We rowed another league or so, the entire length of the straight and foaming coast of Procida. From time to time the boy would raise and shake his torch, which threw a somber light upon the rocks and showed us everywhere a wall of stone that was not to be scaled. Finally, on turning a point of granite that projected out into the sea like a bulwark, we saw the cliff bowed and hollowed out, somewhat like a breach in a fortification. One movement of the rudder served to direct the boat toward the shore. Three final strokes threw our harassed boat between two rocks, where the foam bubbled on the shallow bottom.

XII.

The prow of the boat in striking against the rock gave a dry and hollow sound like the crash of a board that falls accidentally and breaks. We jumped into the water; we fastened the boat as well as we could with the rope that was

left, and then followed the old man and the child who took the lead.

We climbed a sort of a narrow stairway that led up the side of the cliff, a succession of uneven steps—slippery with the spray from the sea—which had been dug out with a chisel. The ascent up this steep stairway had been greatly facilitated by some artificial steps, made by long poles, the points of which had been forced into the apertures of the rock, and these frail supports covered by planks torn from old boats, or by heaps of branches from the chestnut trees, still ornamented with their dead leaves.

After having ascended slowly four or five hundred steps in this way, we found ourselves in a kind of inclosure, suspended on high, and surrounded by a parapet of stones. At the end of this court-yard there were two gloomy archways that seemed to lead into a cave. Above these great arches were two arcades, low and rounded, with a terrace for a roof, the edges of which were decorated with flower pots of rose-

mary. Under the arcades a rustic walk could be seen, in which hanging masses of maïs glistened in the light of the moon like golden ornaments.

A door made of planks rudely dovetailed opened upon this walk. At the right, an inclined plane of ground, upon which a little house was situated, gradually came up to the same level. A great fig-tree and some tortuous vine stalks were bending over the angle of the house, confusing their leaves and fruits at the entrance of the walk, festooned and creeping over the wall that supported the arcades above. Their branches half formed bars to the two low windows that looked out upon this little garden walk; and if there had been no window, the low, square and solid house might have been mistaken for one of the light gray rocks, peculiar to the coast, or for one of those blocks of petrified lava (entwined in the branches of the chestnut, the ivy and the vine), out of which the grape cultivators of Castellamare and Sorrento hew caves, close them with a door, and

there preserve the wine by the side of the stock that first bore it.

Out of breath from the long and steep ascent we had made, and from the weight of the oars which we carried on our shoulders, the old man, my companion and I stopped in this court-yard for a moment in order to rest. But the boy, tossing his oar upon a pile of brushwood, ran lightly up the stairway, and, with his torch still lighted and in his hand, began knocking at one of the windows and calling in glee for his grandmother and sister.

“Mother! Sister! Madre! Sorrellina! Gaetano! Graziella!” he shouted. “Wake up; open the door; it’s father; it’s me; and we have strangers with us.”

We soon heard a voice, not more than half-awake, yet clear and soft, utter some exclamations of surprise from within the house. Then the window was partly opened, pushed up by an arm naked and white, that reached out from a flowing sleeve, and we saw by the light of the

torch which the boy, balancing himself on tip-toe, raised toward the window, the lovely face of a young girl appear between the shutters which were thrown widely open.

Awakened from a fast sleep by the unexpected sound of her brother's voice, Graziella did not think, nor had the time, to arrange her dress. She had hurried to the window in bare feet and just as she had arisen from the bed. Her long black hair, half of which fell down over one of her cheeks, the other half curled around her neck, was swept from one side of her shoulder to the other by the wind, which still blew harshly, and it kept hitting the shutter and lashing her face like the wing of a raven driven by the storm.

The young girl rubbed her eyes with the back of her hands, raising her elbows and expanding her shoulders, with the first natural gesture of a child on awaking that wishes to drive away sleep. Her night-robe, fastened lightly around her neck, revealed only the out-

lines of a high and delicate waist, the youthful rounding of which was scarcely perceptible under the covering. Her eyes, large and oval in form, were of that undecided color between deep black and the blue of the sea, which tones down the natural radiance by a certain softness of expression and unites in the woman's eye the gentleness of her soul and the force of her passion in about equal proportions,—a celestial color which the eyes of the Asiatic and Italian women borrow from the brilliant light of their fiery days and from the serene blue of their heaven, their sea, and their night. Her cheeks were full, round, plump, of a natural pale complexion, but a little browned by the climate; not of the unnatural pallor of the North, but of that pure whiteness of the South, which resembles the color of marble exposed for centuries to the air and sea. Her mouth, the lips of which were half-opened and very full, and heavier than those of our women, had the characteristic lines of frankness and goodness. Her teeth,

small but shining, sparkled in the fluttering light of the torch like the shells of pearl glistening at the bottom of a wave under the rays of the sun.

While she was talking to her little brother half of her words were carried to us by the wind, and, though somewhat sharply accentuated, they sounded like sweet music to our ears. Her features, as changeable as the flitting torch that lighted them up, rapidly passed from surprise to alarm, from alarm to joy, from sympathy to laughter. Then she saw us standing behind the trunk of the great fig-tree, and retired in confusion from the window. Her hand abandoned the shutter that now began to beat freely against the wall. She only took the time to awaken her grandmother and half-dress herself when she came to open the door for us under the arcades, and tenderly kissed her grandfather and her brother.

XIII.

The old grandmother soon made her appearance, holding in her hand a lamp of red earth-

enware, which cast its light upon her thin, pale face and her hair, that was as white as the skeins of wool which were tossed over the table at the side of the spinning-wheel. She kissed her husband's hand, and the boy on the forehead. The recital of what had occurred, which has taken up so many of these pages, required only a few words and gestures between the different members of this poor family. We did not hear the whole of it. We stood apart from them that we might not stop the natural outpourings of their hearts. They were poor; we were strangers; and we owed them a certain respect. The only way we had of showing it was by taking the place nearest the door and keeping perfectly still.

Graziella looked at us in surprise from time to time, as if she were in a dream. When the father had finished his story, the grandmother fell on her knees by the fireside; Graziella, stepping up to the terrace above, brought in a branch of rosemary and some orange-blossoms

like large white stars. She took a chair, arranged her flowers into a bouquet, fastening them with the long pins that she drew from her hair, and placed them before a little plaster image of the Virgin, which stood above the door, and before which a lamp was burning. We understood that this was an offering of thanks to her divine protectress for having saved her brother and grandfather, and we shared her expression of gratitude.

XIV.

The inside of the house was as bare and, in almost every way as like to the outside, as both inside and outside were like the immense rocks that surrounded it. The walls were entirely without plaster and only covered with a thin coat of whitewash. The lizards, aroused by the light, shone in the crevices of the rocks and crept under the fern leaves that served as the children's bed. Nests of swallows, whose little black heads peeped out, and whose restless eyes

twinkled in surprise, hung down from the beams, still covered with bark, which formed the roof. Graziella and her grandmother slept in the second room on a curious bedstead, covered with a piece of coarse linen. A few baskets of fruits and a mule's pack-saddle lay on the shelf.

The fisherman turned toward us with a look of shame as he indicated by a sweep of his arm the poverty of his home; then he led us up to the terrace, the place of honor both in the Orient and in the south of Italy. With the assistance of Graziella and the child Beppo, he made us a sort of shed by placing one end of our oars upon the wall surrounding the terrace and the other end upon the ground, then covering these with a dozen or more branches from a horse-chestnut tree, recently cut on the side of the mountain. Under this shelter he spread a lot of fern-leaves; he then brought us two pieces of bread, some fresh water and figs, and wished that we might sleep well.

The physical fatigue and the emotions of the day threw us into a sudden and deep sleep. When we awoke the swallows were chirping around our bed and picking from the ground the crumbs of our supper; and the sun, already high in the heaven, heated the fagots of leaves over our heads as if they had been in a furnace.

We lay a long time stretched upon our fern leaves, lost in that peculiar state of a half-sleep, in which the mental faculties perceive and think before the senses give one the courage to get up or move. We exchanged a few inarticulate words that were interrupted by long pauses and were lost in our dreams. The experiences of the previous day, the boat rolling under our feet, the angry sea, the inapproachable rocks of the coast, the face of Graziella looking out between the two shutters and in the light of the torch,— all these visions flitted before us confusedly and without connection or appreciation.

We were attracted from this drowsiness by the sobs and complaints of the old grandmother, who

was talking to her husband inside of the house. The chimney, which ran through the terrace, brought us the sound of the voices, so that we could hear some words of the conversation. The poor woman was lamenting the loss of her jars, of the anchor, of the ropes that were almost new, and, above all, of the beautiful sails woven by her own hands from her own hemp, all of which we had been cruel enough to throw into the sea to save our own lives.

“What business had you,” she asked of the old man, who was frightened into silence, “to take these two strangers, these two Frenchmen, with you? Don’t you know that they are pagans (*pagani*,) and that they always bring misfortune with their wickedness? The saints have punished you for it. They have stripped us of our riches, and you may still thank them that they have not taken away our souls.”

The poor man did not know what to say. But Graziella, with the authority and impatience of a spoiled child, to whom the grandmother always

gives way, protested against these reproaches as unjust, and taking the part of the old man, said to her grandmother :

“ Who tells you that these strangers are pagans? Are pagans ever so compassionate for the trials of poor people as these gentlemen have shown themselves? Do pagans make the sign of the cross like ourselves before the statues of the saints? Now, let me tell you that, yesterday evening, when you had fallen on your knees to return thanks to God, and when I had adorned the image of the Madonna with flowers, I saw them bow their heads as if they were praying, make the sign of the cross upon their breasts, and I even saw a tear glisten in the eye of the younger and fall upon his hand.”

“ A tear, indeed! ” the old woman sharply exclaimed. “ It was nothing but a drop of sea water that fell from his hair.”

“ I tell you that it was a tear,” said Graziella, angrily. “ The wind that was blowing so fiercely had plenty of time to dry his hair from the time

he left the beach until he had climbed to the top of the cliff. But the wind can not dry the heart, and I tell you again that there was water in his eye.’’

We understood that we had an all-powerful friend in that house, for the grandmother did not answer, nor did she complain any more.

XV.

We hastened to descend into the house in order to thank the poor family for the hospitality we had received at their hands. We found the fisherman, his wife, Beppo, Graziella, and even the little children preparing to go down to the sea-shore to visit the abandoned boat, and to see if it was sufficiently well fastened to withstand the storm which was still raging. We went down with them, our heads hanging, timid as guests who have brought misfortune into a family, and who are not sure of the feelings entertained for them.

The fisherman and his wife walked several paces in front of us all; Graziella, holding one of her little brothers by the hand and carrying the other in her arms, came after; we followed silently in the rear. At the last turning of the steps, one could see the shoals that had hitherto been concealed by a rock which intervened, and we heard a cry of pain from both the fisherman and his wife as they came to this point. We saw them lift their naked arms toward heaven, wring their hands as if in convulsions of despair, strike their foreheads, and tear out bunches of their white hairs, which the wind tossed among the rocks.

Graziella and the children soon mingled their lamentations with the others. Jumping down the last step of the stairway, they all rushed toward the sea, and advanced into the very foam made by the immense waves driven into the shore, and there threw themselves down upon the beach, some on their knees and the others flat on their faces. The old woman lay

with her face concealed in her hands and her head in the wet sand.

We looked upon this scene of despair from the height of the last rock of the stairway, without having the courage to advance or the decision to retrace our footsteps. The boat had been securely fastened, but there being no anchor to hold the back part of it steady, it had been tossed about by the waves during the night, and torn to pieces on the sharp points of the projecting rocks, which should have protected it. Half of the poor bark was still held by the rope with which we had fastened it. It was beating itself against the cliff with a dismal sound, like the last, hoarse, desperate groanings of a dying man.

The other parts of the hull—the stern, the mast, the painted seats, and the sides—were scattered here and there on the beach, like the limbs of a corpse torn asunder by wolves after a fight. When we arrived at the edge of the water, the old fisherman was running from one

to the other of these remnants. He lifted them up successively, stared at them with a tearless eye, and let them fall to walk further on. Graziella was weeping, seated on the ground, her head buried in her apron. The half naked children ran into the shallow water, crying after the floating boards and endeavoring to turn their course toward the shore.

As to the old woman, she did not cease sobbing for a moment, nor talking while she sobbed. We could only catch confused words or disconnected sentences that rent the air and pierced our hearts.

“Oh, cruel sea! deaf sea! worse than the demons of hell! without heart and without honor!” she cried, with that wonderful fluency of injured persons, while she shook her clenched fist at the waves. “Why did you not take us, all of us, since you have taken that with which we earned our bread? There! There! There! You *shall* take me in pieces, if you will not take me all at once.”

While speaking these words she raised herself upon her knees, and tearing off pieces of her dress and pulling handfuls of hair out of her head, she threw them vehemently into the sea. She threatened the sea with her closed hand, and kicked at the foam as it came up on the beach; then, passing alternately from anger to grief, and from terrible convulsions to resignation, she again sat down in the sand, leaned her head upon her hands, and, weeping all the while, looked around on the loose planks which were beating up against the rocks.

“Poor boat!” she cried, as if it had been the remains of some dear friend recently taken from life and love; “is this the end that awaited thee? Did we not owe it to thy faithful services to perish with thee — perish together as we have lived together? Here in pieces, in shreds, in dust, but crying to us, all the night long, on the rock, where we should have rushed to save thee! What canst thou think of us? Thou hast served us well, and we have betrayed, abandoned, and

lost thee. Lost so near our house, and within the reach of thy master's voice! Thrown up upon the beach, like the remains of a faithful dog that the wave returns to the feet of the master who has drowned it."

Then the tears choked her utterance, and she began to go over the enumeration of all the good quantities of the boat, of all the money it had cost, of all the recollections which she cherished for the floating remnants.

"Was it for this that we had thee refitted and repainted after the last fishing? Was it for this that my poor boy, before he died and left three children without father or mother, built thee with so much care and love, and almost entirely with his own hands? When I used to come and take the baskets of fish out of the hold, I could always recognize the marks of his hatchet in the wood, and I kissed the places in memory of him. Now it is only the shark that kisses them. During the long winter evenings he himself had carved the little image of St. Francis

out of wood with his knife, and afterwards placed it at the prow to protect the boat from the storm. Oh, pitiless Saint! how has he shown his gratitude? What has he done with my son, with his wife, and the boat left to earn a living for his poor children? How has he protected himself and where is his own image, now the plaything of the waves?"

"Mother! mother!" cried one of the children, picking from the beach between two rocks a piece of the boat, cast up by a wave, "here is the Saint!"

The poor woman forgot all her anger and all her blasphemy, jumped toward the child and into the water, took the piece of board carved by her son, and, bathing it in tears, carried it to her lips. Then she sat down and nothing more was heard from her.

XVI.

We assisted Beppo and the old man in picking up, one by one, the pieces of the boat that were distributed along the beach. We drew the main

part of it further in upon the shore. We made a pile of these remnants, as some of the planks and iron fastenings might still be of use to these poor people ; we rolled large stones over the whole, so that if the sea should get higher, the waves might not again scatter them. Then we began to retrace our steps toward the house, walking sadly and far behind the family. Both the want of a boat and the state of the sea precluded a departure for the present.

After having partaken, in silence and with downcast eyes, of a bit of bread and some goat's milk, which Graziella brought to us under the shade of the fig-tree near the fountain, we left the house to its mourning and betook ourselves to walking about under the vine-arbor and the olive-trees that grew upon the high table-land of the island.

XVII.

My friend and I scarcely spoke to each other, but we both had the same thought, and by a common instinct we sought the pathways that

led to the eastern point of the island and would bring us to the village of Procida, near by. Some herdsmen and young girls in Grecian costume whom we met, and most of whom carried jugs of oil on their heads, directed us into the right way when we had strayed from it. We arrived at the village after an hour's walk.

"This has been a sad affair," said my friend to me.

"We must make it a joyful one for these good people," I answered.

"I have thought of the same thing," said he; and he rattled his purse, which still contained a goodly number of golden sequins.

"So have I, but I have only five or six sequins with me. I shared equally in the catastrophe, and I should also make half of the reparation."

"For the present I am the richer of the two," replied my friend. "I have an account with a banker in Naples. I will advance what is necessary, and we will arrange our accounts in France."

XVIII.

In talking the matter over, we slowly descended the steep streets of Procida. It was not long before we arrived at the "marine," as the harbors in the Archipelago and on the coast of Italy are called. The beach was covered with boats of Ischia, Procida and Naples, which had been overtaken by the tempest of the evening before and obliged to seek safety in these waters. Sailors and fishermen were sleeping in the sun, lulled by the monotonous roar of the waves, and scattered about in groups laughing and talking. From our dress, and particularly from the shape of the caps which we wore, they took us to be sailors from Tuscany or Genoa, left at Procida by one of the brigs that carry oil or the wine of Ischia.

We walked up and down the beach, searching with our eyes for a substantial and well-rigged bark, that could be easily handled by two men, and as nearly as possible of the same size and

shape as the one which we had lost. We had no trouble finding one. It belonged to a rich fisherman of the island, who was the fortunate possessor of many others. This one had only seen a few months of service. We went immediately to see the owner, whose house was pointed out to us by the children in the street.

We found the man to be cheerful, pleasant and good-hearted. He was visibly affected by the account of the disaster which we gave him and of the desolation of his poor fellow-countryman of Procida. He did not abate a single piastre in the price which he had fixed upon the boat, but, on the other hand, he did not charge more for it than it was really worth, and, the trade concluded, my friend paid him thirty-two golden sequins on the spot. For this sum the boat and new rigging, which included sails, jars, ropes and anchor, were made over to us.

We then made the equipment complete by purchasing from a junk-dealer two woolen cloaks, one for the old man and the other for the boy;

to this we added nets of different kinds and sizes, baskets for fish, and some household utensils for the use of the women. We also agreed with the dealer in boats that we would pay him three sequins extra on the morrow, if he would have the boat taken that same day to a certain point of the island which we designated. As the storm had abated considerably, and as the high land of the island protected the sea from the wind to a great extent, he agreed to this proposition, and we took our departure to walk back to Andrea's little house.

XIX.

We walked slowly, sitting down at times under the trees, under the shade of every grape-arbor, chatting, dreaming, dickering with all the young *Procidane* for the baskets of figs, medlars and raisins, which they carried, and giving the hours time to slip by. When, from the height of a promontory, we saw our boat gliding noiselessly into shore, we hastened our steps in order to

arrive at the house at the same time as the rowers.

We could hear neither footstep nor voice within the little house or among the vines that surrounded it. Two beautiful doves with large, splendid plumage and white wings striped with black, picked at the grain of maïs on the wall of the terrace, and this was the only sign of life that seemed to animate the place. We ascended to the terrace without noise, where we found the whole family lost in sleep. All, except the children, whose pretty heads were lying side by side in the arms of Graziella, slept in that attitude of weariness produced by sorrow.

The old mother's head was laid upon her knees, and her heavy breathing came out like sobs. The grandfather was stretched out on his back, his arms folded, in the glaring sun. The swallows just grazed his white hair as they flew by him. The flies literally covered his forehead, dripping with sweat. Two hollow furrows running down to his mouth showed that the strength

of the man had given away and that he had fallen asleep while weeping.

This sight touched our hearts, but the thought of the happiness that we were about to bring these poor people consoled us. We awakened them, and as we did so, we threw at the feet of Graziella and her little brothers, the fresh bread, the cheese, the salt meat, the grapes, the oranges and the figs with which we had supplied ourselves during the walk. The young girl and the children did not dare to get up under this rain of abundance which showered down as from the heavens upon them. The father thanked us for his family. The grandmother regarded the scene with a dry, dull eye, and yet the expression of her face was one of anger rather than of indifference.

“Come, Andrea,” said my friend to the old man; “a man should not weep twice for that which he can acquire again with work and courage. There are still planks in the trees of the forest and sails in the growing hemp. There

is nothing but a man's life worn out by grief that can not be regained. One day of tears consumes more force than a year of work. Come down with us and bring your wife and children. We are your sailors and we will assist you in bringing up here this very evening what is left of our wreck. You shall make fences of it, beds, tables, furniture of all sorts, and one day, in your old age, it will bring joy to your heart to sleep tranquilly among the very planks that once cradled you upon the ocean."

"They may at least serve to make us our coffins," grumbled the old woman.

XX.

They all got up, however, and followed us as we slowly descended the steps to the shore, but we perceived that the sight of the sea and the sound of the surge were painful to them.

I shall not attempt to describe the surprise and joy of these poor people as from the last rocks of the stairway they saw the beautiful new

boat glittering in the sun, and drawn up on the sand and along side of what was left of the old one, and when my friend said to them :

“It is yours.”

They all fell on their knees as if overcome by the same joy, each one on the particular step that had been reached, to thank God before they could find words to thank us. But their happiness was all the thanks we wanted.

They arose at the call of my friend and ran swiftly toward the boat. They went around it at first shyly and at a distance, as if they feared that it was a magic boat which might vanish if they touched it. Then they approached nearer to it, then laid their hands on it, and afterwards carried the hands that had touched it to their foreheads and their lips. Finally they cried out in exclamations of admiration and joy, and, joining hands, from the old woman down to the smallest child, they danced around it.

XXI.

Beppo was the first to step into the boat. Leaning over from the little deck at the prow, he drew from the hold, one by one, all the parts of the rigging which we had provided and stowed away there: the anchor, the ropes, the four-handled jars, the handsome new sails, the baskets, and the cloaks with wide sleeves; he struck the anchor and made it ring; he raised the oars above his head; he unrolled the sails; he felt the texture of the cloth of the cloaks; he showed all these rich possessions to his grandfather, his grandmother, his sister, with exclamations and gestures of uncontrollable joy. The old man, his wife, Graziella,—all wept as they looked first at the boat and then at us.

The sailors who had brought the boat from the town had concealed themselves behind the rocks, and they wept too. Everybody blessed us. Graziella, with her eyes fixed upon the ground and much more serious than the rest in

her gratitude, approached her grandmother, and I heard her whisper, as she pointed her finger towards us :

“ You said that they were pagans, but I told you that they might rather be angels. Now, which of us was right ? ”

The old woman threw herself at our feet and pleaded for pardon that she had suspected us. From that time she loved us almost as dearly as she did her granddaughter or Beppo.

XXII.

Having paid the sailors from Procida the three sequins as agreed upon, we told them that they might go. Each of us took from the hold some one article of the rigging, which we carried to the house instead of the remnants,—all the wealth of this happy family. In the evening after supper and when the lamp had been lighted, Beppo took from the head of his grandmother’s bed the battered piece of wood from which his father had carved the rude image of

St. Francis; he took a saw and cut into it, then planed it down with his knife and finally repolished and repainted it. He proposed on the following morning to fix it on the inside of the prow, in order that the new boat might have something of the old about it.

It was in this way that the people of antiquity, when they had raised a temple on the site of one which had been torn down, always took care to introduce into the new building some of the materials, or at least a column, of the old one, in order to preserve something of the old and sacred in the modern, and in order that the souvenir, crude and worn, should have its worship and its influence over the heart, even among the master-pieces of the new sanctuary.

Man is everywhere the same. Human nature has always the same instincts, which it exercises in the Parthenon, in St. Peter's of Rome, or in a poor fisherman's boat on the shoals of Procida.

XXIII.

This night was perhaps the happiest of all the nights that Providence had destined for this little house, from the time it sprang up from the rocks until the moment it should crumble into the dust. We slept amid the gusts of wind through the olive-trees, the sound of the waves on the coast, and the rays of the moon peeping over the terrace. On awaking in the morning, the sky was as smooth as a polished crystal, the sea dark and striped with foam, as if sweating from swiftness and fatigue; but the wind roared more furiously than ever. The white spray from the waves at the point of Cape Miseno rose higher than on the previous evening. It bathed the coast of Cumæ in an ebb and flow of luminous fog, which never ceased to rise and fall alternately. There was not a sail to be seen in the Gulf of Gaëta or that of Baïa. The sea-swallows whipped the waves with their white wings—the only birds that find their

element in the storm, and that shriek with joy during shipwrecks, like the cursed inhabitants of the Bay of the Dead, who await their prey in the ships lost at sea.

We found, without, however, saying anything about it to each other, a secret pleasure in being thus imprisoned by the bad weather in the house and vineyard belonging to the old fisherman. It gave us the time to have a full taste of the novelty which our situation afforded, and to enjoy the happiness of this poor family, to which we had become attached like children.

The wind and heavy sea kept us there nine whole days. We had wished, and I more than my friend, that the storm would never cease, and that some uncontrollable and fatal necessity would keep us for years where we found ourselves such happy captives. The days rolled by insensibly, one like another. Nothing can prove better how little is essential to happiness when the heart is young and enjoys every thing. In the same way the simplest food sustains and

renews the life of the body when it is seasoned by a good appetite, and when the physical organs are fresh and healthy.

XXIV.

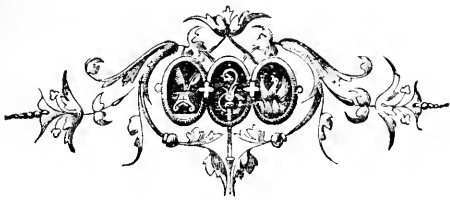
To awake at the cry of the sea-swallows that flitted about our roof of leaves which covered the terrace where we slept; to listen to the childish voice of Graziella, who sang softly in the vineyard from fear of disturbing the sleep of the strangers; to run quickly down to the sea-shore, plunge into the waves and swim about a few minutes in a little basin, in which the fine sand glittered through the transparency of the deep waters, and where the surge and foam did not penetrate; to return to the house slowly in order that our hair and shoulders, dripping from the bath, might dry in the sun's rays; to breakfast among the vines on a piece of bread and cheese which the young girl brought to us and shared with us; to drink the fresh, clear water of the spring, which she carried in a little,

oblong earthen jar, blushing holding it on her arm as our lips sought its edge; afterwards, to help the family in the thousand little things necessary to do about a country house and garden; to repair the face of the walled fence that surrounded the vineyard and supported the terraces; to pick up the great stones which had rolled, during the winter months, from the height of the walls down upon the young vines, and encroached upon the little space left between the stocks for cultivation; to carry into the cellar those great yellow gourds, each one of which was a load for a man, and then to cut their vines, that cover the ground with their large leaves and trip up the foot of the walker in their network; to run between each row of stocks and under the arbors a little ditch in the dry ground, that the rains might gather and keep the earth supplied with water for a longer time; to dig, for the same use, little wells or funnels at the foot of the fig and lemon trees;— these were our occupations of the morning, until

the hour when the rays of the sun darted straight down upon the roof, upon the garden, upon the yard, and forced us to seek the shade of the arbors, where the transparency of the leaves tinged the fluttering shadows with a rich, warm and golden color







PART SECOND.

I.

GRAZIELLA would then return into the house to sit down by her grandmother and sew, or to prepare the meal which we took in the middle of the day. As to the old fisherman and Beppo, they would pass whole days at the water's edge in completing the rigging of the boat, in putting on such finishing touches as their love for their new property inspired, and in testing their nets under the protection of the rocks. They always brought us, for our mid-day meal, crabs or salt water eels, the skins of which glowed more than molten lead. These the old grandmother would fry in olive oil. The oil itself was preserved, according to the custom of the country, at the bottom of a little well dug out of a rock

near the house, and covered with a great stone, to which an iron ring was attached. Some cucumbers, cut into slices and fried, and some fresh shell-fish, very much like muscles, which are called *frutti di mare* (sea-fruit), made up our frugal dinner, the principal and most nourishing meal of the day. Muscatel grapes, in long yellow bunches, gathered in the morning by Graziella, still left on their stocks and covered with their leaves, were served on basket plates braided in wicker, and formed the dessert. A sprig or two of green, raw fennel, mixed with pepper, whose anise-like odor perfumes the lips and lightens the heart, took the place of liqueurs and coffee, after the custom of the sailors and peasants of Naples.

After dinner, my friend and I would seek out some cool and shaded place, high up on the cliff, where we could have a view of the sea and the coast of Bafia; there we passed the hottest hours of the day in looking, reading and dreaming, until four or five o'clock in the afternoon.

II.

We had saved from the waves only three books, and saved these because they happened not to be in the valise which we were obliged to throw into the sea. One was a little Italian work by Hugo Foscolo, entitled "The Letters of Jacopo Ortis," a kind of "Werther," partly political and partly romantic, in which the love of his country's liberty is mingled in the heart of a young Italian with his love for a pretty Venetian girl. This double enthusiasm, nourished by the double fire of the lover and the patriot, inflames the soul of Ortis with a burning fever, and too powerful to be resisted by the sensitive and weakly man, it at last drives him to a suicide's grave. The book, an almost literal but highly colored and luminous copy of Goethe's "Werther," was at that time in the hands of all the young men who, like us, nourished in their souls the two dreams of every man fitted to dream of great things — LOVE and LIBERTY.

III.

The police of Bonaparte and Murat had proscribed both the author and the book. The author found an asylum in the hearts of Italian patriots and the liberal thinkers of all Europe. The book had its sanctuary in the breasts of young men like us; we concealed it there that we might breathe in its precepts.

Of the other two volumes that we had saved, one was Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's "Paul and Virginia," that manual of ingenuous love; a book that reminds one of a page in the world's infancy, torn from the history of the human heart, preserved in all its purity, and wet with tears contagious for all eyes of sixteen years.

The other was a volume of Tacitus, the pages soiled with debauch, shame and blood, but in which the stoic virtue puts its impress upon the apparent impassibility of history, to incite those who can understand it to a hatred of oppression, to the power of great devotions, and to an ambition for a martyr's death.

It happened that these three books corresponded exactly to the three sentiments which, at that time, as if by presentiment, were foremost in our young spirits,—love; enthusiasm for the liberation of Italy and France; ambition for political action and the commotion of grand events, the likeness of which was presented by Tacitus, and for which he steeped our young souls in the blood of his pencil and in the fire of ancient heroism. We read aloud, turn by turn, now stopping to admire, then to weep, then to dream. We broke in upon these readings with long pauses and an exchange of exclamations, which were the spontaneous outbursts of our hearts, carried away by the wind along with our dreams.

IV.

In fancy we placed ourselves in the fictitious or actual situations which the poet or historian reproduced for us. We formed in our own minds an ideal of the lover or the patriot, of private life or of public life, of happiness or of virtue.

We found a secret pleasure in associating with ourselves those great circumstances and wonderful events; those revolutionary times in which the obscurest of men are revealed to the multitude by genius, and called, as if by name, to battle against tyranny and to save nations; then, victims to the ingratitude and instability of nations, to meet death on the scaffold, in the face of the age that forgets them, but also in the face of a posterity that shall avenge them.

There was no *rôle*, however heroic it might be, that would not have found our souls equal to the situation. We were prepared for every thing, and if fortune should not one day destine us to these great trials which we already anticipated in imagination, we revenged ourselves in advance by despising fortune. We cherished in our hearts the consolation of heroic minds that, if our life remained useless, common and obscure, it was fortune that failed to meet our ambition, and not our ambition that failed to meet fortune.

V.

When the sun had gone down we took long walks all over the island. We traversed it in every direction. We went into the town, where we bought bread and the vegetables which were wanting in Andrea's garden. Sometimes we brought back with us a little tobacco—the sailor's opium, that animates him on the water and consoles him on land. We returned when night had fallen, our pockets and hands full of our modest offerings. In the evening the whole family would assemble on the roof, which in Naples is called the "astrico," in order to pass away the hours before bed-time. There is nothing so picturesque in all the beautiful nights of this climate as the scene of the astrico in the moonlight.

In the country, the low, square house looks like an antique pedestal, supporting living groups and animated statues. All the inhabitants of the house ascend to the roof and move about or

sit down in different positions; the rays of the moon or the light of the lamp brings out the various profiles and stamps them upon the blue surface of the firmament. One sees the old mother sewing; the father smoking his earthen pipe with its reed stem; the young boys leaning on their elbows over the edge and singing in long, dragging notes the peculiar airs of the sailors and rustics, the prolonged sound of which vibrates like the lament of a bark tortured by the waves, or the sharp hum of the grasshopper in the sun; the young girls with their short dresses, their bare feet, their green and open sacks laced with silken or golden thread, and their long black hair falling over their shoulders and covered with a handkerchief which they fasten about their necks in great bow-knots, in order to protect their hair from the dust.

These girls dance on the roofs alone or in pairs; one holds a guitar and the other raises above her head the tambourine with its miniature cymbals. These two instruments, — the one soft

and plaintive, the other loud and one-toned — harmonize wonderfully well in giving an artless expression to the two alternating refrains of the human heart — joy and sorrow. They may be heard during the summer nights from nearly every roof on the islands, or in the country surrounding Naples, and even on the boats. This aërial concert, that reaches the ear from every side, from the sea to the mountains, sounds like the buzzing of a new insect born of the heat and humming under the beautiful sky above. This poor insect is no other than man, who, for a few days, celebrates in song his youth and love before God, and then is hushed forever. I have never been able to hear these expanding tones from the *astrico* without stopping to listen further, and, as I listened, to feel my pent-up heart ready to burst from either an inward joy or a sadness which I could not control.

VI.

Such were the attitudes, the music and the voices on the terrace of Andrea's roof. Grazi-

ella played the guitar, and Beppino, making his childish fingers beat time on the tambourine that not many years before had served to lull him to sleep in his cradle, accompanied his sister. Although the instruments were gay ones, and the actions of the players those of joy, the melodies themselves were sad. The tones, delicate and rare, went to the heart and there touched the sleeping chords. Such is music everywhere when it is not a senseless play upon the ear, but the harmonious wail of passions which come from the soul through the voice. Every accent is a sigh, and every note brings a tear with its sound. It is impossible to strike hard upon the heart without bringing out tears, so full of sadness is human nature at the core, and so easily does that which affects it force the dregs to our lips and the mist to our eyes.

VII.

Even when the young girl, at our urgent request, modestly arose to dance the *tarentella* to

the sound of the tambourine, played by her brother, and when, carried away by the whirling motion of this national dance, she waltzed about, holding her arms up gracefully, imitating with her fingers the clacking of the castanets, her quick steps sounding like the pattering of rain on the terrace; yes, even then, there was in her bearing, in her attitudes, in the very frenzy of this delirium of action, something sad and serious, as if all joy were nothing more than a momentary oblivion, and as if it were necessary that youth and beauty should be lost in infatuation and drunk with motion in order to attain the light of happiness.

VIII.

More often we would hold serious conversations with our friends. We would induce them to tell us all about their former life, the traditions and recollections of their family. Each family has its history and even its romance for one who knows how to give it form and expres-

sion. This one had had its nobility, its fortune, and its influence in the past.

Andrea's grandfather was a Greek merchant living on the island of Egina. Persecuted on account of his religion by the Pacha of Athens, he had one night embarked his wife, sons, daughters and fortune in one of the ships which he owned in commerce. He took refuge in Procida, whose inhabitants were also Greeks, and some of whom he had known in business relations. Here he purchased a large property, of which the only remnant was the little farm where we were staying, and the family name engraved upon some tomb-stones in the village church-yard. His daughters had died in the convent of the island, where they had taken the veil. His sons had lost his entire fortune in storms at sea, which had shipwrecked their vessels. The family had fallen into decay. It had gone so far that the aristocratic and high-sounding Grecian name was changed for the obscure one by which the fisherman of Procida was then known.

“When a house falls,” said Andrea to us, “men demolish it even to the last stone. Of all that my ancestors possessed under heaven, there is only left to me my two oars, the boat you have restored to me, this cabin, the garden that does not yield a support to my family, and the grace of God.”

IX.

The grandmother and daughter then asked us to talk of ourselves; tell them who we were; where we came from, in what country we were born, and what our parents did for a living; whether, indeed, we had a father, mother, brothers, sisters, a house, fig-trees and a vine-yard; why we had left all these things so young to come and row upon the sea, to read, to write, to dream during the day and sleep at night upon the ground of the Gulf of Naples. We had told our story in vain; they could not be made to understand that it was only to look at the heavens and the sea, to breathe out our soul in the sunlight, to gratify the longing of our youth, to

gather impressions, sentiments, ideas that we might afterwards put in verses, like those which they saw in our books, or like those that the *improvisatori* of Naples recited of a Sunday evening to the sailors on the quay or at Margellina.

“You are making fun of me,” said Graziella, as she burst out into laughter. “You poets! Why, your hair does not stand on end, nor are your eyes haggard, like those of the men whom they call poets at ‘la marine.’ You poets! Why, you do not even know how to strike a single note on the guitar. With what, pray, will you accompany the songs that you compose?”

Then she shook her head at us, and made pretty faces with her lips, and got half vexed, because we would not tell her the truth.

X.

Once in a while a dark suspicion would enter Graziella’s mind, and she would look at us with doubt or a shade of fear reflected in her eyes.

But this did not last long, for we could hear her say softly to her grandmother :

“No, it is not possible. They are not fugitives from their country, driven away for bad deeds. They are too young and too good to be familiar with evil.”

Then we amused ourselves by reciting to her dark deeds of blood, of which we declared ourselves to be the perpetrators. The contrast of our smooth, calm foreheads, our quiet, undisturbed eyes, our smiling lips and our open hearts, with these imaginary crimes, made her and her brother laugh and soon dissipated all thoughts of distrust.

XI.

Graziella often questioned us about the contents of the books from which we read every day. She thought that they contained prayers; for she had never seen books except at church in the hands of the pious who knew how to read and could follow the holy words of the priest.

She thought us very pious since we spent whole days in murmuring over these mysterious words; only she was surprised that we did not become priests or monks in some seminary of Naples or in one of the monasteries of the islands. In order to enlighten her, we tried on two or three occasions to read to her, by translating into the homely language of the country as we went along, some passages from Foscolo and some beautiful fragments from our Tacitus. We believed that these patriotic sighs of the exiled Italian and the grand tragedies of imperial Rome would make a strong impression upon our simple hearers; for the populace possess a love of country in their instincts, a heroism in their sentiment, and something dramatic in their glance. That which they retain above all is the recollection of great disasters and heroic deaths. But we soon perceived that the eloquence and the situations which exercised so potent an influence over us had no effect on these simple souls. The senti-

ment of political liberty—the ambition of men of leisure—does not descend to the level of the masses.

These poor fishermen could not see why Ortis should be driven to despair and kill himself when he was enjoying all the luxuries of life: roaming about with nothing to do but to gaze at the sun, to love his sweetheart, and to pray to God on the green banks of the Brenta.

“Why torment himself,” they would say, “with ideas that do not reach the heart? What matters it to him whether the Austrians or the French rule at Milan? He is a fool to make himself so much trouble, and about such things.”

And they would listen no further.

XII.

They were still less inclined to listen to the works of Tacitus. An empire or a republic; men who cut each other's throats, some that they might rule and others that they might not live to see themselves slaves; crime for a

throne, virtue for glory, death for posterity;—all fell coldly upon these people. The storms of history burst too high above their heads for them to be affected by their raging. To them it was like the thunder that rolls beyond the mountains, which they did not notice, because it did not touch the peaks, much less disturb the fisherman's sail or the farmer's house.

Tacitus is only popular among politicians and philosophers. He is the Plato of History. His nature is too refined and sensitive for the vulgar mind. To comprehend it the reader must have lived among the tumults of the public square and the intrigues of the palace. Take away liberty, ambition, and glory from these scenes; and what is left? These are the three great actors in his dramas. But these three passions are unknown to the masses because they are passions of the soul, and the masses feel only the passions of the heart. We remarked this from the coldness and surprise that these fragments spread about us.

We concluded one evening that we would read to them from "Paul and Virginia." I undertook the task of translating as I read, for I had pored over the book so much that I knew it nearly by heart; besides, having familiarized myself with the Italian language during my more extended stay in the country, I found the expressions without any difficulty, and they rolled from my lips like my mother tongue. Hardly had this reading begun when a change came over the faces of our little audience, indifference being replaced by an expression of interest and attention — a certain indication of the emotion of the heart. We had at last touched the chord that vibrates the same in the souls of all men, of all times, and of all conditions — the sympathetic chord, the universal chord, the chord whose touch resounds the eternal truth of art: Nature, the love of God.

XIII.

I had only read a few pages before the old folks, the young girl and the child had changed

their positions. The fisherman, his elbow upon his knee and his ear inclined toward me, had forgotten to inhale the smoke of his pipe. The old grandmother sitting opposite to me, held her two hands folded under her chin, after the manner of the poor women who listen to the word of God as they are crouched upon the hard floor of the church. Beppo had come down from the terrace wall where he had been sitting a short time before, and had placed his guitar noiselessly on the floor. He laid his hand upon the strings, that the wind might not agitate them as it blew over. Graziella, who generally stood at some distance, involuntarily drew nearer to me, as if she had been attracted by some invisible magnet concealed in the book.

Leaning against the terrace wall, at the foot of which I had stretched myself, she came nearer and nearer to me, supporting her whole body with her left hand upon the ground, in the attitude of the Wounded Gladiator. She looked with great open eyes now at the book; now at my

lips whence came the words that interested her; now at the space between the book and my lips, as if searching for the invisible spirit that communicated them. I heard her irregular breathing, hushed or hurried in response to the developments of the drama, like the tired breathing of some one clambering up a mountain's side and stopping from time to time for rest. Before I had arrived at the middle of the story the poor child had forgotten her almost wild reserve with me. I felt her warm breath on my hands. Her hair touched my forehead. Two or three burning tears trickled down her cheeks and blotted the page close to my fingers.

XIV.

With the exception of the low and monotonous sound of my voice which translated literally to the fisherman's family this poem of the heart, and of the heavy, distant, dismal sound of the waves beating up against the shore under our feet, there was not a noise to be heard.

And this moaning of the sea was in keeping with the reading. It was like the presentient catastrophe of the story, that came rumbling through the air from the beginning and during the course of the recital. The more the story developed, the more attractive it seemed to be to our simple-minded listeners. When I hesitated, perhaps to find the Italian synonym for the French word, *Graziella*, who for some time had been protecting the lamp from the wind with her apron, would hold it down so near to the book, in her impatience, that it would almost burn the leaves, as if she thought that the light of the flame would bring intellectual perception into my eyes, and cause the words to spring more lightly to my lips. Smiling, I put away the lamp softly with my hand without taking my eyes from the book, and I felt my fingers warm with her tears.

XV.

When I came to that part of the book where Virginia, recalled to France by her aunt, feels as

though her very being was rent asunder, and forces herself to console Paul under the banana trees, speaking to him of a return, and pointing out the sea that is to carry her away, I closed the volume and postponed further reading till the morrow.

This was a blow at the very hearts of the poor people. Graziella fell on her knees before me, then before my friend, to beg of us to finish the story. But she pleaded in vain. We wished to prolong the interest for her, and the delight in watching it for ourselves. Then she snatched the book from my hands; she opened it as if she would, by the very force of her will, decipher the characters before her. She talked to it; she kissed it; she returned it with a respectful air to its place on my knees, while she joined her hands and looked up in my face pitifully.

Her features, usually so serene and smiling, but a little severe in their impassibility, had suddenly taken from the passion and sympa-

thetic tenderness of the recital something of the animation, the confusion and the pathos of the story. It seemed as though a sudden revolution had metamorphosed this beautiful piece of marble into humanity and tears. The young girl felt her soul, that had slept until this time, revealing itself to her in the soul of Virginia. She seemed to have grown six years older in this one half-hour. The stormy shades of passion had marbled her forehead, cheeks, and the bluish white of her eyes. She was like a calm and placid sheet of water, in which the sun, the shade and the wind come to wrestle for possession unexpectedly and for the first time. We could scarcely take our eyes from her as she sat in this position. She, who, up to this time, had only afforded us pastime, now inspired us with respect. But it was still in vain that she conjured us to continue; we did not wish to use all our influence over her at one time, and the sight of those dear tears of hers was too pleasant a one for us to exhaust the source in a single day. She

retired at last poutingly, and put out her light in anger.

XVI.

The next morning when I found her under the arbor and wished to talk with her, she turned away, as if she were trying to hide her tears, and refused to answer me. I could see by the dark border that encircled her eyes, by the dull, dead pallor of her cheeks, and by the slight and graceful quivering at the corners of her mouth, that she had not slept and that her heart was still heavy with the imaginary sorrows of the evening before. Wonderful power of a book, that can work upon the feelings of an untutored child and an ignorant family with all the force of a reality, and the reading of which is an event in the life of the heart!

The reason of it is that, just as I translated the poem, so the poem translated nature, and that the events, so simple in themselves,—the cradle of these two children at the feet of two poor mothers, their innocent loves, their cruel sep-

aration, the return thwarted by death, the wreck, and the two graves under the banana-trees that closed over one heart,— are things which all the world can feel and understand, from the palace to the fisherman's cabin. Poets search after genius afar off, when it is to be found in the heart, and when a few simple chords, piously and happily touched on the instrument attuned by the Deity itself, are enough to make a whole century weep, to become as popular as love, as sympathetic as sentiment. The sublime tires, the beautiful may deceive, the pathetic alone is infallible in art. He who knows how to touch the heart knows all. There is more true genius in one tear than in all the museums and all the libraries of the universe. Man is like a tree which is shaken that its fruit may drop to the ground: you can never move the man that the tears do not fall.

XVII.

All that day the house seemed as sad as if some sorrowful event had occurred within the

humble family circle. The several members assembled at the table, but almost without speaking to each other; they separated and met again without a smile. We could see that Graziella had no heart in her work in the garden or on the roof. She looked up often to see if the sun were not setting, and of this whole day it was apparent that she only awaited the evening.

When the evening had come, and we had taken our customary places upon the astrico, I reopened the book and finished the reading amid tears and sobs. Father, mother, children, my friend, myself,—all took part in the general emotion. The sad and serious sound of my voice harmonized, without my knowing it, with the sadness of the story and the seriousness of the words. They seemed, at the end of the reading, to come from a distance and fall from above into the soul, with the hollow sound of an empty bosom in which the heart beats no longer, and which partakes of the things of this earth only in sorrow, religion or reminiscence.

XVIII.

It was simply impossible for us to go through the empty forms of conversation after this reading. Graziella remained quiet and without a movement in the attitude in which she had listened, as though she were listening still. Silence—the applause of real and durable impressions—was broken by no one; each respected in the other the thoughts he felt to be the same as his own. The lamp, gradually burning down, at last went out imperceptibly, and no one raised a hand to relight it. The family arose and retired without noise. My friend and I were left alone, astonished at the omnipotence of truth, simplicity and sentiment over all men, all ages and all countries.

Perhaps another emotion was stirring at the bottom of our hearts. The ravishing image of Graziella, transfigured by her tears, introduced to sorrow by love, was associated in our dreams with the heavenly creation of Virginia. These

two names and these two young girls, all confused in wandering visions, charmed and saddened our restless sleep till morning.

During the evening of that day and the two following evenings we had to re-read the same story twice to the young girl. We would have read it a hundred times, if she had not tired of asking for it. It is the characteristic of the Southern imagination, profound and dreamy as it is, that it seeks no change in poetry or in music. For these people, music and poetry are only themes which they elaborate into their own feelings. They feed upon the same verses and the same airs for centuries and never tire of them. Nature itself—the sublimity of music and poetry—what has she but two or three words and two or three notes, always the same, with which she saddens or fascinates men from the very first sigh to the very last?

XIX.

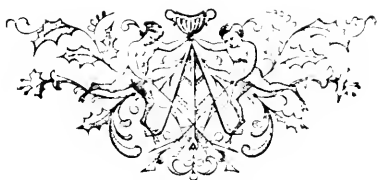
At the rising of the sun on the ninth day of our stay, the wind, which was equinoctial, began

to fall, and in a very few hours the sea became again the sea of Summer. The very mountains of the coast of Naples, as well as the waters and the sky, seemed to float in a clearer and bluer fluid than during the warmest weather, as if the sea, the firmament and the mountains had already felt the first chill of Winter, which crystalizes the air and makes it sparkle like the frozen water of the glaciers. The fig-leaves had browned, the vine-leaves were yellow, and they began to fall and fly around the yard. The grapes had been gathered. The figs, dried in the sunlight on the *astrico*, were laid in layers in great baskets, plaited from sea-weeds by the women. The boat was all ready to venture out into the sea and the old fisherman to take his family to Margellina.

The house and roof were thoroughly swept and scoured. The spring was covered with a large stone, that the dry leaves and the winter rains might not spoil the purity of its waters. The oil was taken out of the little well in the

rock, then put into jars and carried down to the shore by the children, by fixing sticks into the handles. Mattresses and the bed-covering were done up into large packages and bound with cords. The lamp under the image of the fire-side saint was lighted for the last time. There was a final prayer before the Madonna, in which the house, the fig-trees and the vineyard were confided to her care for several months. Then the door was closed. The key was hidden under the edge of a rock covered with ivy, that the fisherman might know where to find it, if he returned during the Winter to visit the house. Afterwards we went to the shore, helping the poor family to carry and stow away the oil, the bread and fruits.







PART THIRD.

I.

OUR return to Naples by the Gulf of Baïa and along the crags and declivities of Posilippo, was a perfect festival for the young girl, for the children, for my friend and myself, and a triumph for old Andrea. We went into Margellina at nightfall and singing. The old friends and neighbors of the fisherman did not tire of admiring his new boat. They helped unload it and pull it up on the beach. As we had forbidden him to say to whom he owed it, they paid little attention to us.

After having secured the boat and carried the baskets of raisins and figs above Andrea's cellar and near the threshold of the three low rooms where the old grandmother, the children

and Graziella lived, we retired unobserved. Not without an oppression of the heart, we traversed the noisy tumult of the populous streets of Naples and entered our lodgings.

II.

We proposed, after a few day's rest in Naples to resume the same life with the fisherman, whenever the sea would permit it. We had become so accustomed to simplicity in our dress and to being in the uncovered boat during the last three months, that the bed, the furniture in our rooms and the conventional dress of the town seemed to us an irksome and fastidious luxury. But we hoped that we had resumed them for a few days only. In the morning, however, we went to the post-office to get our back letters and my friend found one from his mother. She recalled her son to France, at once, to assist at his sister's wedding. His brother-in-law was to come as far as Rome to meet him. From the date of the letter, it was probable that he had

already arrived there. There was no time to lose; he must set out.

I, too, ought to have gone with him. I do not know what charm of isolation and adventure kept me. The mariner's life, the fisherman's cabin, the image of Graziella, all had something to do with it, but every thing was confused. The unrestrained freedom, a certain pride in being my own master three hundred leagues from home, a passion for the mysterious and for the undiscovered — the ethereal perspective of young imaginations — counted for more.

My friend and I parted in manly tenderness. He promised that he would rejoin me just as soon as he had done his duty as a son and a brother. He loaned me fifty louis to fill the vacuum that six months had made in my purse, and he departed.

III.

This departure, the absence of this friend who was to me what an elder brother is to a mere child, left me in a loneliness that seemed to

increase with every hour, and in which I felt myself sinking as into an abyss. All my thoughts, all my sensations, all my words, which formerly vanished as soon as communicated to him, now remained in my soul, there mouldered, saddened, and fell back upon my heart with a weight that I could not again throw off. The turmoil in which nothing interested me; the crowd in which I was known to no one; the little room in which nothing congenial met my glance; the inn-life in which you are constantly elbowing strangers, in which you sit at a silent table, next to ever-changing and indifferent faces; the books that you have read a hundred times and whose immovable characters always reproduce the same ideas in the same phrases and in the same places; all this, which had seemed so delightful to me in Rome and in Naples before our excursions and nomadic and erratic life of the Summer, now seemed to me a slow death. My heart was drowned in melancholy.

For the first few days I felt this sadness I rambled through the streets, went from one theater to another, and from one book to another, without being able to throw it off. At last I fell ill of the disease called homesickness. My head became heavy and my limbs refused to carry me. I was pale and haggard. I no longer ate. Silence saddened me; noise pained me. I passed the nights without sleep and lay upon my bed during the day, having neither the desire nor the strength to get up. The old relative of my mother's, the only one who could have taken any interest in me, had gone to spend some months about thirty leagues from Naples in Abruzzo for the purpose of establishing a factory there.

I sent for a physician. He came, looked at me, felt my pulse and told me I was not sick. The truth is that I had no disease for which medicine affords a remedy; my disease was one of the soul and of the imagination. The physician went away, and I saw no more of him.

IV.

Yet I was so sick on the following day that I began to think of some one whom I could call in for help and pity if I became so ill as not to be able to go out. The poor family at Margelina naturally came into my mind, for I was still living as one of its members in reminiscence. I sent a child who served me to seek Andrea, and to say to him that the younger of the two strangers was sick, and wished to see him.

When the child had carried his message, Andrea had gone to sea with Beppino; the grandmother was on the quay at Chiaia, occupied in selling her fish. Graziella was alone in the house with her little brothers. She barely took the time to confide the children to the care of one of the neighbors and to put on her best dress, and then followed the child, who showed her the street, the old convent, and ascended the stairway before her.

I heard a slight knocking at my door, which

opened immediately after, as if pushed by some invisible hand. I saw Graziella. When she saw me, she uttered a cry of pity, and sprang forward toward my bed; then, suddenly stopping and drawing back, she joined her hands over her apron, and gracefully inclined her head on her left shoulder in an attitude of sympathy.

“How pale he is!” she said, half to herself; “how great a change these few days have made in his appearance! And where is the other?” she asked, as she turned to find the usual companion of my room.

“He is gone,” I said; “and I am alone and unknown in Naples.”

“Gone!” she exclaimed. “Gone! leaving you alone and sick? Did he not love you, then? Ah! If I had been in his place I would not have left you; and yet I am not your brother, and, indeed, have known you only since the first day of the storm.”

V.

I explained to her that I was not ill when my friend left me.

“But how is it,” she asked quickly, in a tone that was half tender and half reproachful, “that you did not think you had other friends at Margellina? Ah! I see,” she added, as she looked down sadly at her sleeves and the folds of her dress; “it is because we are poor people, and you were ashamed to have us come into this beautiful house. Never mind,” and she brushed away the tears, which had been falling on my forehead ever since she had stood by me; “even if we had been scorned, we should have come all the same.”

“Poor Graziella,” I answered with a smile; “God grant that I may never live to see the day when I shall be ashamed of those who love me.”

VI.

She took a chair, sat down at the foot of the bed, and we talked a while.

The sound of her voice; the serenity of her eyes; the calm and trusting freedom of her bearing; the innocence of her face; the irregular and plaintive accent peculiar to these women of the islands, which recalls, as in the East, the submissive tone of the slave amid the very breathings of love; the recollection of the delightful days passed with her in the cabin and the sunshine; the sun of Procida, which seemed to shine again in my dreary room from her brow, form and feet; all these things, as I looked at her face and listened to her voice, so lifted me from my languor and suffering, that I thought myself suddenly cured. It seemed to me that I could get up and walk as soon as she should leave me. Yet I felt myself so well for her presence that I prolonged the conversation as much as possible. I detained her under a thousand pretexts, from fear that she would go too soon and carry off with her the happiness she had brought me.

She waited on me a part of the day, without

fear, without affected reserve, without false modesty, as a sister who waits on a brother, never thinking him to be a man. She went out and bought me some oranges. She bit into the peel of one of them with her beautiful white teeth, that she might squeeze the juice into my glass as she pressed it between her fingers. She took from her neck a little silver medal, hanging to a black cord, and concealed in her bosom. This she fastened with a pin to my white bed-curtain. She assured me that I would soon be cured by the virtue of this holy image. Then, as twilight began to appear, she left me, but not without returning twenty times from the door to the bed to see whether I did not wish something more, and to beg me to pray devoutly to the image before I went to sleep.

VII.

Whether it was the virtue of the image and the prayers she undoubtedly addressed to it; whether it was owing to the soothing influence of the spirit

of gentleness and interest that I had in Graziella's face, or to the delightful diversion that her presence and conversation had brought to my weak and nervous condition, it is equally certain that she had no sooner left the room than I fell into a sound and peaceful sleep.

On awaking the next morning, and seeing the orange peel strewn about the floor of my room, Graziella's chair still turned toward my bed, as if she had but just left it, shortly to return, the little medal attached to the curtain by its black silk cord, and all those evidences of a woman's care and attention, of which I had been deprived for so long a time, it seemed to me, while I was yet scarcely awake, that my mother or one of my sisters had been in my room the evening before. It was only when I had opened my eyes widely, and recalled my wandering senses, that Graziella's face appeared to me as I had seen it the evening before.

The sun was so bright, rest had so strengthened my limbs, the solitude of my chamber

weighed so heavily on my heart, the longing to listen again to the sound of a well known voice urged me so strongly, that I got up at once, feeble and trembling as I still was. I ate the oranges that were left, went down into the street, called a *corricolo* that was standing on the corner, and, as if by instinct, directed the driver to take me to the Margellina quarter.

VIII.

When I had arrived in front of Andrea's little low house, I ascended the stairway that led up to the platform above the basement, and upon which the rooms occupied by the family opened. I found assembled on the *astrico* Graziella, her grandmother, the old fisherman, Beppino and the children. As I met them they were on the point of going out, dressed in their best clothes, to make me a visit. Each carried, in a basket, in a handkerchief or in the hand, some present that these poor people thought would be most acceptable to me or best for me to have. One

had a flask of the golden white wine of Ischia, closed, in place of a cork, by a stopper formed of rosemary and aromatic herbs that perfumed the bottle; another had dry figs; another had medlars, and the little children oranges. The heart of Graziella had passed over to all the rest of the family.

IX.

An exclamation of surprise came from them as they saw me appear before them, still pale and weak, but erect and smiling. In her joy, Graziella let the oranges which she held in her apron fall to the ground, and, clapping her hands together, she ran toward me.

“I told you,” she cried, “that the image would cure you if it could rest but one night on your bed. Did I deceive you?”

I took the medal from my breast, where I had placed it before coming out, and handed it to her.

“Kiss it first,” she said to me.

I did kiss it and perhaps the tips of the

fingers which she had reached out to take it from me.

“I will return it to you if you fall sick again,” she added, as she put the cord around her neck and let the medal glide into her bosom; “it will serve for two.”

We sat down on the terrace in the morning sunlight. They all seemed as happy as if they had recovered a brother or a child who had been absent on a long voyage. Time, which is essential to the formation of intimacies among the higher classes, is not necessary to friendship among the lower classes. Hearts are opened in confidence and joined together at once, for there is no suspicion of interest lurking under the feelings. Eight days will seal a closer friendship among the people of nature than will ten years among the people of society. This family and I were already relatives.

We told each other what had happened of good or bad since we had parted. Their poor house had struck a vein of good fortune. The

boat was blessed. The nets were lucky. The fish had never been so plenty. The grandmother alone was not equal to the sale of the fish to the people who passed before her door; Beppino, proud and strong, was as good as a sailor of twenty years, although he was no more than twelve. Graziella was learning a trade far above the humble calling of the family. Her wages, already large for the work of a young girl, and increasing constantly with her ability, would suffice to clothe her little brothers and to accumulate for her a very respectable dowry, when she should be "of an age and inclination for love making."

Her relatives told me these things. She was learning the art of working coral. The manufacture and trade in coral formed at that time the principal revenue of the industry of the towns along the coast of Italy. An uncle of Graziella, brother to the mother she had lost, was the superintendent of one of the largest coral factories in Naples. Already rich for his

station in life, and having charge of a large number of workmen and workwomen, he found their services insufficient to meet the demand that came from all parts of Europe for this luxury. It was for this reason that he had thought of his niece, and a few days before, he had come to enroll her name among his workwomen. He had brought her the coral and the tools, and had given her the first lessons in the very simple art.

The other women worked in common at the factory, but Graziella, owing to the constant and unavoidable absence of her grandmother and grandfather, was the only guardian of the children, and so did her work at home. Her uncle, who could not absent himself often from his business, was accustomed to send to the young girl his eldest son, Graziella's cousin and a young man of about twenty years, who was quiet, steady and reserved, a good workman but very simple-minded, ungainly and somewhat deformed in his person. He came in the even-

ing, when the factory had been closed, to examine his cousin's work, to perfect her in the proper use of the tools, and also to give her the first lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic.

"Let us hope," said the old lady to me softly while Graziella turned her head aside, "that this will result to the advantage of both of them, and that the master will become the servant of his bride."

I saw that the grandmother had a good deal of pride and ambition in regard to her daughter's future. But Graziella did not suspect it.

X.

The young girl took me by the hand and led me into her room that I might admire the coral work which she had already turned and polished. The specimens were neatly arranged on cotton in little pasteboard boxes on the foot of the bed. She wished to fashion a piece in my presence. I turned the wheel of her machine with my foot, opposite her, as she presented the red coral-

branch to the circular knife, which cut into it with a grating sound. Then she rounded off the pieces by holding them in the ends of her fingers against the grind-stone.

The rose-colored dust covered her hands, and, flying into her face from time to time, powdered her lips and cheeks as with a light paint, that made her eyes appear all the bluer and more brilliant. Then she laughingly wiped off her face and shook her black hair, so the dust covered me in turn.

“This is just the work for a child of the sea like me, isn't it?” she asked. “We owe everything to the sea, from my grandfather's boat and the bread we eat to these ear-rings and ornaments, with which I shall perhaps adorn myself some day, when I shall have polished and fashioned enough for those who are richer and handsomer than I am.”

The morning passed in this way — gossiping, laughing and working—without the thought ever entering my head that I must go away. At noon

I partook of the family meal. The bright sun, the fresh air, the contentment of soul, the frugal meal,—which consisted simply of bread, a piece of fried fish and some preserved fruits from the cellar,—had given me strength and appetite. After dinner I assisted the old man in mending the meshes of a net he had stretched out upon the astrico.

Graziella, whose foot we heard tramping regularly upon her machine; the noise of her grandmother's spinning wheel; and the voices of the children who were playing with oranges on the doorstep, formed a melodious accompaniment to our work. Graziella came out from time to time to shake her hair over the balcony, when we would exchange a look, a friendly word or a smile. I felt that I was happy, without knowing why,—happy to the very soul. I could have wished to be one of the aloe-plants twining about the garden fence, or a lizard that sunned itself near us on the terrace and lived with this poor family in the crevices of the wall.

XI.

But my soul and my face grew dark with the day. I became sad with thinking that I should be obliged to return to my lodgings. Graziella was the first to notice it. She whispered a few words in her grandmother's ear, and then the old lady said to me as if I had been her own son:

“Why do you leave us? We got along very well together in Procida, and are we not the same in Naples? You look like a bird that has lost its mother and goes about crying from nest to nest. Come and live with us—if you find our lodgings good enough for a gentleman like yourself? The house has only three rooms, it is true, but Beppino sleeps in the boat. The children's room will do for Graziella too, if she might work during the day in the room which you would occupy. Take hers, then, and await here the return of your friend. It is too bad to think that a young man, as good and sad as you are, should be alone in the streets of Naples.”

The old fisherman, Beppino, even the little

children, who already loved the stranger, joined in with the grandmother's idea. All insisted earnestly that I should accept her offer. Graziella alone was silent, but she awaited with an anxiety plain to be seen, although she attempted to conceal it with a little dissemblance, my answer to her relatives' entreaties. She stamped her little foot with a nervous and involuntary movement at all the discreet reasons I gave for not accepting.

At last I lifted my eyes to hers. I saw them moister and more brilliant than usual, and noticed that she rubbed and crushed between her fingers branches of a sweet-basil plant that grew in one of the flower-pots on the balcony. I understood this movement better than long speeches. I accepted the community of life that was offered me. Graziella clapped her hands gleefully and rushed out into her room without looking back, as if she proposed to take me at my word and did not wish to give me time to retract it.

XII.

Graziella called Beppino. In a moment she and her brothers were carrying into the children's room her bed, her scant furniture, her little looking-glass with its frame of painted wood, the brass lamp, the two or three images of the Virgin that had been hanging upon the wall, fastened there with pins, the table and the little machine at which she worked her coral. They brought water from the well, and with the palm of their hands scoured the floor; they swept the coral dust carefully from the wood-work and the wall; they placed upon the window-sill two pots of the most beautiful and fragrant balsam and mignonne that they could find on the *astrico*. They could not have been more particular in cleaning and arranging a bridal-chamber if Beppino were to have brought home his wife that very evening. I laughingly helped them in this pastime.

When all was done, I took Beppino and his grandfather with me to buy and bring to the

house such little furniture as it was necessary for me to have. I bought a little iron bedstead complete, a plain wooden table, two rush-bottom chairs, a little brazen fire-pan, in which, according to custom, to burn olive-stones of a winter's evening to warm the room; my trunk, which I sent for, contained all the rest of my possessions. I did not wish to lose a single night of this happy life that carried me back to my own family. That same evening I slept in my new lodgings. I did not awake till I heard the joyous cry of the swallows, that had entered my room through a broken window-pane, and Graziella's voice singing in the room next to me, accompanying her song with the monotonous movement of her machine.

XIII.

I opened the window which looked out upon the little gardens belonging to the fishermen and washerwomen, and encased in the rocks of Mount Posilippo and in the Piazza della Margellina.

Great rocks of brown sandstone had rolled

down from Mount Posilippo into these gardens and very near the house. Large fig-trees, that were growing so near the rocks as to be half crushed by them, seized these rocks with their white tortuous arms and covered them with thick, motionless leaves. From this side of the house I could see only the gardens of these poor people; some wells, over which stood large wheels, which were turned by asses, for the purpose of watering the gutters that ran between the rows of fennel, turnips and cabbages; women drying linen on ropes that were stretched from one lemon-tree to another; little children in their shirts, that were crying or playing on the terraces of the three or four little white houses scattered through the gardens. This prospect, so contracted, common and bare, of the suburbs of a large city, was a delightful one to me in comparison with the high houses, dark streets and noisy crowd of the quarters I had just left. I breathed pure air instead of the dust, the fire and the smoke of the human atmosphere which

I had just left. I heard the braying of the asses, the crowing of the cock, the rustling of the leaves, the roaring of the sea, instead of the rumbling of wagons, sharp cries of the people selling their wares, and the incessant thunder of all the rasping noises in the streets of a large city, which afford no relaxation to the ear and no quiet to the mind.

I could not tear myself from my bed for enjoying the sun, the sounds of the country, the flying of the birds and a repose of the soul that was scarcely ruffled; and then, looking at the nakedness of the walls, the emptiness of the room and the meagerness of the furniture, I rejoiced to think that this poor household at least loved me, and that carpets, elegant hangings and silk curtains were not worth that little affection. All the gold in the world can not buy a single heart-beat nor a single glance of tenderness from the eyes of those who are indifferent to you.

These thoughts rocked me softly in my cradle of half-sleep; I felt myself reborn to health and

peace. Beppino came into the room several times to see if I needed anything. He brought to my bed bread and grapes, which I ate, throwing the crumbs and the little stones to the swallows. It was nearly noon. The full rays of the sun entered through the window, when I arose, with the peculiarly mild temperature of the Autumn. I agreed with the fisherman and his wife upon a small price which I was to pay them monthly for the rent of my room, and to add something toward defraying the general expense of the household. It was very little, indeed, but these good people thought it a great deal too much. It was easy to see that, far from desiring to make anything from my stay with them, they were sorry that their poverty and their necessarily modest way of living did not permit them to offer me a hospitality of which they would have been prouder if it had cost me nothing. They added to what they usually bought every morning two little loaves of bread, a piece of fish boiled or fried for dinner, milk or dried fruits for supper,

oil for my lamp and some charcoal for the colder days; this was all.

A few copper grani, a small coin in use among the people of Naples, sufficed to pay my daily expenses. I have never better understood how independent happiness is of luxury, and how much more of it one can buy with a single copper penny than with a purse of gold, when one knows just where God has hidden it.

XIV.

I lived in this way during the last months of Autumn and the first months of Winter. The beauty and quiet of these months in Naples make one confound them with those that precede them. Nothing disturbed the monotonous tranquility of our life. The old man and his grandson did not go out into the open sea any more, on account of the frequent storms of this season of the year. They continued to fish along the coast, and the fish they caught, which the grandmother sold at the "marine," was sufficient for their life without wants.

Graziella perfected herself in her art; she grew rapidly and developed beautifully in the more quiet, sedentary life which she lived since she had been working coral. The pay, which her uncle brought her every Sunday, was enough, not only to keep her brothers better and more neatly clothed than formerly and send them to school, but to give, besides, to her grandmother and herself many of those rich and elegant articles of dress peculiar to the women of their island: handkerchiefs of red silk to hang down behind the head and over the shoulders in a triangular shape; shoes without heels, that covered only the toes of the feet and were embroidered with silver cord; silk sacks striped in black and green. These sacks are laced at the seams and fall open on the hips; they expose to view the form of the waist and the mould of the neck ornamented with chains. They wore, besides, carved ear rings, in which pearls were interwoven with gold threads. The poor women of the Grecian islands wear these ornaments. No distress ever

forces them to give them up. In climates where the sentiment of beauty is more lively than under our sky, and where life is nothing but love, these ornaments are not luxuries in the eyes of the women: they are the first and almost the only necessity.

XV.

When on the Sabbath and fête days Graziella thus attired would come out from her room upon the terrace, with a flower or two of rose-laurel or pomegranate on the side of her head and hidden in her black hair; when, listening to the sound of the bells in the neighboring chapel, she walked up and down before my window, as proud as a pea-fowl that suns itself on the roof; when she languidly trailed her little feet, imprisoned in spangled slippers, looking at them as she did so, and then raised her head with an habitually graceful turn of the neck that caused the silk handkerchief and her hair to toss about over her shoulders; and when she saw that I was looking at her, she would blush as if ashamed of

being so handsome. It was in such moments as these that the new brilliancy of her beauty struck me so forcibly that I imagined I saw her for the first time, and my customary, familiar manner would change into a sort of reserve and bashfulness.

But she tried so little to be dazzling and her natural instinct for ornaments was so devoid of vanity and coquetry, that just as soon as she returned from the holy ceremonies of the day, she hastened to take off her rich apparel, and in its place to put on the simple jacket of coarse green cloth and her dress of red and black striped calico, and to slip on her feet her other slippers with a wooden heel, which could be heard upon the terrace all the rest of the day like the echoing slippers of the female slaves in the Orient.

When her young friends did not call for her or her cousin accompany her to church, I would often go with her myself and wait on the church-steps until the service was over. When she came

out, I heard with a sort of personal pride, as if she had been my sister or my sweetheart, the murmurs of admiration which her graceful figure excited among her companions and among the young sailors of the quays of Margellina. But she heard nothing of all this and, seeing no one but me in the crowd, smiled upon me from the very highest step, made her last sign of the cross, her fingers dripping with the holy water, and, with her eyes drooping modestly, came to the bottom of the stairway where I stood waiting for her.

Almost every festival, I took Graziella in this way, night and morning, to church service, the pious and the only recreation which she knew and loved. I took care on such occasions to make my dress as nearly as possible like that of the young sailors of the island, that no one might be astonished at my presence and that I might be taken for the brother or relative of the young girl whom I accompanied.

On other days she never went out. As to

myself, I had resumed gradually my former studious life and solitary habits, relieved only by my pleasant friendship with Graziella and my cordial relations with the family. I read the historians and poets of all languages. Sometimes I wrote; I tried, now in Italian now in French, to pour out in prose or verse the first passions of the soul, which seem to weigh on the heart until words have lightened it by giving them expression.

It would seem as though language is the only predestination of man, and that he is created to bring it forth as his fruit. Man frets until he has given external expression to that which works within. Written language is like a mirror which it is necessary to have in order that man may know himself and be sure that he exists. So long as he does not see himself in his works he is not sure that he lives. The soul, like the body, has its ripe age.

I was just at that time of life when the soul has need to nourish and multiply itself in words.

But, as is always the case, I felt the desire before I possessed the power of expression. I had no sooner written than I was dissatisfied with my work, and threw it away in disgust. How often have the wind and the waves of the sea of Naples carried away and engulfed the shreds of thoughts and sentiments of the night before, torn up in the morning, and flying far away from me without a single regret?

XVI.

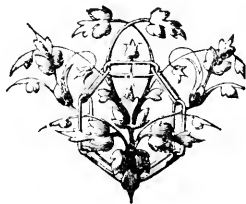
Sometimes Graziella, seeing me shut up in my room and silent longer than usual, would steal in softly to tear me away from my reading or other occupation. She would advance noiselessly behind my chair; raise herself on tip-toe to look over my shoulder, without understanding a word of what I read or what I wrote; then, with a quick and sudden movement, she would snatch the book or the pen out of my fingers as she ran away. I would follow her to the terrace half inclined for the moment to be angry; she

would laugh. Then I would forgive her, and she would scold me as if she had been my mother.

“What has this book to say to your eyes that it keeps you so long to-day?” she would ask with an impatience that was half real and half playful. “Will these black lines on this ugly old paper never get through talking to you? Do you not already know enough stories to tell one over every Sunday and every evening of the year, like that which made me cry so much at Procida? And to whom do you write all night long those letters which the next morning you throw to the wind and the sea? Do you not know that you are making yourself sick, and that you are all pale and nervous reading or writing so long? Is it not better to talk with me, who can look into your eyes, than with the dead, or with ghosts, who can not hear you? Lord! If I had as much spirit as those sheets of paper! I would talk to you the whole day, I would tell you every thing that you wanted to

know, and you would not be obliged to wear out your eyes and burn out all the oil in your lamp.”

Then she would hide my book and pens, bring me my coat and sailor's hood, and make me go out to walk. I would obey her under protest and — love.







PART FOURTH.

I.

I USED to take long walks through the town, on the quays and into the country; but these lonely walks were not as sad as during the first days of my return to Naples. I enjoyed to the full the delightful sights of the city, on the sea-shore, and of the heavens and the waters. That heavy feeling of isolation did not overwhelm me as formerly, but concentrated the force of my thoughts and soul in deep meditation. I knew that kind eyes and friendly thoughts followed me whether in a crowd or a deserted place, and that hearts, full of my presence, awaited my return.

I was no longer like the lost bird crying around strange nests, to use the expression of

the old grandmother; I was like a bird that flies far from the branch which holds it, yet always knows its way back. The whole tide of my affection for my absent friend had been turned upon Graziella. This sentiment, however, was something more lively, acute and affectionate than that which attached me to my friend. It seemed to me as though one was the consequence of habit and circumstance, but that the other was born of me and that I had attained it of my own choice.

It was not love; I felt neither the palpitations, the jealousy nor the absent-mindedness of passion; there was a delicious repose of the heart instead of a fever of the soul and senses. I thought neither of loving otherwise nor of being loved more. I did not know whether she was a companion, a friend, a sister, or in what relation she stood to me; I knew only that I was happy with her, and that she was happy with me.

I wished for nothing more, nothing else. I

was not of an age to analyze what I experienced and thus afford myself an abstract and useless definition of my happiness. It was enough for me to feel quiet, affectionate and happy without knowing how or why. Living and thinking together cemented every day more and more strongly the harmless and gentle intimacy that had been formed between us, and she was as pure in her confidence as I was undisturbed in my indifference.

II.

During the three months that I was of the same family, living under the same roof, and, as it were, making a part of her very thought, Graziella became so accustomed to looking upon me as inseparable from her that she did not herself know, perhaps, how large a place I held in her heart. In my presence she showed none of the shame, reserve and fear that interpose in the relations between a young girl and a young man, and which often cause love to be born of the very precautions which are intended to keep

it away. She never dreamed, nor did I, scarcely, that the natural graces of the child, developed with all the splendor of an early maturity, made her artless beauty a power for her, an admiration for all, and a danger for me. She took no pains to conceal it or adorn it in my eyes; she no more thought of it than a sister thinks whether she is pretty or homely in the eyes of a brother. She did not cover her bare feet with her shoes any more frequently when she dressed her little brothers in the morning on the terrace, under the sun, or when she helped her grandmother sweep the fallen leaves from the roof. She came into my bedroom, the door of which was always open, at any hour, and sat down on a chair at the foot of the bed as innocently as Beppino did the same thing.

On rainy days and in bad weather I would pass whole hours in her room, just next to mine, where she slept with the children and worked at her coral. I assisted her, laughing and chatting, with her work, which she taught me.

With less art but more strength than she possessed, I succeeded better in trimming the pieces. In this way we accomplished double the work and in one day she earned the pay of two.

But in the evening, when the children and the family had retired, it was she who became the scholar and I the teacher. I taught her to read and write, and made her spell the words in my books, or write them as I held and directed her hand. It was impossible for her cousin to come every day and, when he did not, I took his place. Whether it was because this young man, humpbacked and deformed, did not inspire his cousin with sufficient regard and respect, notwithstanding the kindness, patience and seriousness of his manner, or because there was too much to attract her attention from the lesson when he gave it, it is certain that she made more progress with me than with him.

With him, half of the evening set apart for study was passed in playing, mimicking and

laughing at the pedagogue. The poor young man was too much taken up with his pupil and too timid in her presence ever to scold her. He did everything she wished him to do in order that the pretty forehead of the young girl should not contract into a frown or her ripe lips form into a pout. Very often was the hour that should have been devoted to reading passed in paring coral, in reeling skeins of wool on the grandmother's distaff, or in mending some of Beppo's torn nets. It was all the same to him, if, when he went away, Graziella smiled upon him pleasantly and said "*addio*" to him in a tone of voice that might have meant "*au revoir*."

III.

But when I was the teacher, the lesson was serious. It often extended away into the night until our eyes were heavy with sleep. I could see in her drooping head and stretched neck, in the attentive immobility of her attitude and features, that the poor girl made every effort to

succeed. She leaned her elbow on my shoulder to read out of the book in which my finger traced the line and indicated the word to be pronounced. When she wrote I held her fingers in my hand to half-guide the pen.

If she made an error, I scolded her severely; she would not answer, and if she ever became impatient it was only at herself. I saw her sometimes just ready to cry; then I would speak more softly and encourage her to begin again. But if she had read or written well, it could be seen that she looked for her reward in my applause. She would turn around to me, blushing, with pride and joy depicted on her forehead and in her eyes, prouder of the pleasure that she gave me than of the little triumph of her own success.

I always rewarded her by reading a few pages of "Paul and Virginia," which was still her favorite, or some of those beautiful stanzas of Tasso's in which he describes the rustic life of the shepherds with whom Herminia lived, or

where he sings the laments or despair of the two lovers. The music of these verses made her weep and dream long after I had ceased to read. Poetry has no echo so loud and long as in the heart of youth in which love is just springing into life. It is like the presentiment of all the passions. Later it is their souvenir and their dirge. It brings tears in both extremes of life: to the young, tears of hope; to the old, tears of regret.

IV.

The delightful intimacy of these long, quiet evenings, in the light of the lamp and by the genial warmth of the olives that burned in the pan at our feet, brought no other thoughts nor familiarities between us than those of children. We were guarded, I by my almost cold indifference, she by her frankness and purity. We separated as tranquilly as we had met, and a moment after these long interviews, we fell asleep under the same roof, within a few feet of each other, like two children who have been

playing together in the evening, who dream of nothing else than their simple amusements. These peaceful sentiments which ignore while they nourish themselves, might have lasted for years, had not a circumstance transpired that changed every thing and revealed to us the nature of a friendship that had sufficed to make us so very happy.

V.

Cecco, for such was the name of Graziella's cousin, continued coming to the house more assiduously from day to day, and to pass the winter evenings with the family of the *marinaro*. Although the young girl showed him no mark of preference, and, indeed, often made him the butt of ridicule, he was so soft, so patient and so humble in her presence that she could not help being touched by his kindness, and sometimes smiled upon him graciously. This was all he asked. His was one of the weak but loving hearts, which, feeling itself disinherited by nature of qualities that inspire affection, was content to

love without return, and he made himself a voluntary slave to the service if not to the happiness of her to whom he had given that heart. Such natures are not always the most noble but often the most touching instances of affection. You may pity them, but you must admire them. To love for the sake of being loved is human, but to love for the sake of loving is angelic.

VI.

And, under the homeliest of features, there was something angelic in the love of poor Cecco. Far from experiencing any humiliation or jealousy from the familiarity or preference which Graziella showed me before his very eyes, he loved me because she did. He did not demand the first or the only place in the affection of his cousin, but the second or the last: any place was enough for him. To give her a moment's pleasure, to earn one look of gratitude, or a gesture, or a gracious word, he would have searched for me in the remotest corner of France and brought me back to

her who preferred me to him. I believe he would have hated me if I had caused her the slightest pain.

His pride as well as his love was in her. Perhaps inwardly cold, prudent, reflective and calculating, such as God and his own infirmity had made him, he reckoned intuitively that my power over his cousin's feelings could not last always; that something or other would inevitably happen to separate us; that I was a stranger from a distant country, of birth and fortune evidently incompatible with the station of a poor Procida fisherman's daughter; that some day the intimacy between his cousin and me would be broken off as it had been formed; that then she would be left to him alone, abandoned, desolate; that this very despair would soften her heart and give it to him bruised but entire. This part of consoler and friend was the only one to which he could make any pretension, but his father had another thought for him.

VII.

The father, knowing Cecco's affection for his niece, came to see her from time to time. Moved by her beauty and virtue; astonished at the rapid progress she had made in her art, in reading and writing; thinking, besides, that Cecco's natural deformity did not permit of his inspiring other sentiments than those of agreement and domesticity, he had resolved to marry his son to his niece. His fortune made, and large enough for a workman, permitted him to regard his offer as a favor which neither Andrea, his wife nor the young girl would even think of refusing. Whether he had told his intentions to Cecco, or concealed them in order to surprise his son with his happiness, he resolved to speak to the family.

VIII.

On Christmas Eve I came in later than usual to take my place at the family table. I saw signs of coolness and trouble in the evidently con-

strained features of Andrea and his wife. Lifting my eyes to Graziella, I saw that she had been weeping. Content and joy were so generally to be seen in her face that this unusual expression of sadness covered her like a veil. One would have said that the shadow of her thoughts and heart was spread over her features. I remained silent and motionless, not daring to question these poor people, nor to talk to Graziella, from fear that the sound of my voice would bring on an outburst, which she seemed scarcely able to restrain.

Contrary to her custom, she did not look at me at all. She carried pieces of bread to her mouth with a listless hand, and made believe eat it for appearance' sake; but she could not,—she threw the bread under the table. After the silent meal was finished, she made a pretext for leaving the room to put the children in bed; she took them into their bedroom, and then, without saying good-night to her relatives or to me, she left us alone.

When she had gone out I asked the father and mother what cause there was for their own seriousness and the sadness of their daughter. Then they told me that Cecco's father had been to the house during the day, that he had asked their granddaughter in marriage for his son; that it was great happiness and great good fortune for the family; that Cecco would have property; that Graziella, who was so good, would take her two little brothers with her and rear them as if they were her own children; that now their old days would be assured to them against misery; that they had consented with gratitude to the marriage and then spoken to Graziella about it; that she, from timidity and maidenly modesty, had not answered them at all; that her silence and tears only came from her surprise and emotion, which would soon pass away like a bee over a flower; and that it had been agreed between Cecco's father and themselves that the engagement should be celebrated immediately after the Christmas holidays.

IX.

They talked long after I had ceased to hear a word. I had never rendered myself any account of my attachment for Graziella. I did not know how I loved her,—whether it was pure companionship, friendship, love, habit, or all of these sentiments combined, that made up my affection for her. But the idea of seeing these sweet relations of life and love that had been formed and cemented between us, almost without our knowledge, suddenly changed; the thought that she was to be taken from me all at once and given to another; that from being my companion and my sister she was to become a stranger and indifferent to me; that she would no longer be near me; that I should see her no more after a few hours or a few days; that I should never again hear her voice call me; that I could no longer read in her eyes that ray of caressing light and tenderness always shed upon me, that softly illumined my heart and

reminded me of my mother and sisters; the void and empty night in which I pictured to myself the following day when her husband should take her to another home; this room in which she would sleep no more, my own which she would enter no more, this table at which she would sit no more; that terrace upon which I should no longer hear the pattering of her naked feet, or the sound of her voice in the morning calling me from sleep; the church to which I should take her no more of a Sunday; the boat in which her place would be empty and where I could talk only to the wind and sea; the happy associations of our past life, which rushed into my mind only again to suddenly vanish and leave me in an abyss of solitude and nothingness;—all this made me feel for the first time what the society of this young girl really was to me. All this showed me too vividly that the love, friendship, or whatever the sentiment was that attached me to her, was stronger than I had believed, and that the unknown fascination of my wild Nea-

politan life was neither the sea nor the boat, nor the humble room in the humble house, nor the fisherman, nor his wife, nor Beppo, nor the children: it was a single being, and this being vanished, all else would vanish with her. My life without her presence was nothing. I felt it. The confession of that moment, which I had never before made to myself, gave me such a blow that my heart shook under it, and I experienced something of the infinite of love in the infinite of sadness in which my heart was suddenly submerged.

X.

I sought my room in silence. I threw myself upon the bed without undressing. I tried to read, to write, to think, to distract myself with some hard mental work that could overcome my agitation. But it was all in vain. The inward excitement was so great that I could have but one thought, and the very prostration of my strength would not bring me sleep. Never had the likeness of Graziella appeared so ravishing

to me, and haunted me so persistently. I had been accustomed to enjoy it as something seen every day, the sweetness of which is only felt after it has been lost. Her beauty, indeed, had been nothing to me before that hour; I had confounded the impression that it had made on me with the effect of the friendship which I felt for her, and which her face expressed for me. I did not know that there was a particle of admiration in my attachment; I never dreamed that there was the slightest passion in her tenderness.

And now I could scarcely account for it all, even in the tedious wanderings of my heart during the wakefulness of that night. All was as confused in my grief as in my feelings. I was like a man senseless from some sudden blow, who knows not whence comes his suffering, but knows only that he suffers.

I left my bed before a sound was heard in the house. I can not tell what instinct prompted me to absent myself from the house for some time, as if my presence would be an invasion of

the family sanctuary at a time when fate so cruelly agitated it before a stranger.

As I went out I came upon Beppo and told him that I should be gone for several days. Then I walked listlessly in whichever direction my steps took me. I followed the long quays of Naples, the coast of Resina and Portici, the base of Mount Vesuvius. I took guides for Torre del Greco; I slept that night on a rock at the door of the hermitage of San Salvatore, at the confines of inhabited nature, where the region of fire begins. As the volcano had been in commotion for some time past, and at every upheaval threw out clouds of ashes and stones, which we could hear during the night rolling down into the ravine of lava at the foot of the hermitage, my guides refused to accompany me any further.

I ascended alone; I clambered painfully up the last peak, burying my hands and feet in the thick and burning ashes that gave way under the weight of my body. The volcano roared and

thundered at intervals. Burning stones, still red with fire, rained down around and about me, extinguishing themselves in the ashes. But nothing stopped me. I reached the very edge of the crater and there sat down. I saw the sun rise over the gulf, the country and the splendid city of Naples. I was cold and insensible to this sight which so many travelers come thousands of miles to admire. In this immensity of light, sea, coast, and houses glistening in the sun, I sought only a little white spot among the dark green trees at the other end of the hill of Posilippo, where I thought I could distinguish Andrea's cabin.

Man contemplates and grasps at space in vain; all nature furnishes him but two or three little spots at which his soul aims. Take away from life the heart that loves you, and what is left? It is the same in nature. Blot out the place and the house which your thoughts are seeking or which your reminiscences people, and there is only a noisy nothingness, in which the look penetrates

to find neither end nor repose. Is it surprising then, that the sublime scenes of nature should be regarded so differently by travelers? It is because every one carries with him a different point of view. A cloud over the soul conceals and discolours the earth more than a cloud over the sky. The spectacle is in the spectator. I found it so.

XI.

I looked at every thing; I saw nothing. In vain, like a madman, did I descend, by holding to the sharp points of petrified lava, to the very mouth of the crater. In vain did I leap over the deep crevices, from which the smoke and furious flames came up, suffocating and burning me. In vain did I regard the great fields of sulphur and crystalized salt that looked like glaciers colored by these fiery breaths. I remained as indifferent to the grandeur as I was to fear. My soul was elsewhere; in vain did I try to recall it.

That evening I returned to the hermitage. I dismissed my guides and walked back across the

vineyards to Pompeii. I passed the entire day in roaming about the deserted streets of this engulfed city. This tomb, opened after being closed two thousand years, and returning its streets, its monuments and its arts to the light of the sun, found me as insensible as Vesuvius. The soul of all these ashes had been swept away by the breath of God centuries before, so that it no longer appealed to my heart. I trod on this dust of men, in the streets of what had been their city, with as much indifference as upon the heaps of empty shells cast by the sea upon its shores. Time is a great ocean, which, like the other ocean, overflows with our remains. We can not weep over every thing. Every man has his own sorrows, every century its own pity, and this is enough.

Leaving Pompeii I plunged in among the woody mountain-passes of Castellamare and Sorrento. There I lived for several days, going from one village to another and getting the herdsmen to show me the most renowned places in

their mountains. I was taken for a painter in search of studies, because from time to time I made notes in a little book of drawings that my friend had left behind him. But I was only an erratic soul, wandering here and there in the country to exhaust time. All failed me. It was myself that was wanting.

I could go on no longer in this way. When the Christmas holidays had passed and the first day of the year also—that day of which men have made a festival as if to seduce and appease Time with pleasures and garlands, like a severe guest whom it is desirable to conciliate—I resolved to hasten back to Naples. I reached the city during the night hesitatingly, divided between my impatience to see Graziella and the fear of learning that I should not see her again. I stopped twenty times; I seated myself on the sides of the boats as I neared Margellina.

A few steps from the house I met Beppo. With a cry of joy he threw his arms about my neck as though he had been a younger brother.

He led me toward his boat, and told me all that had happened while I had been away.

Every thing was changed in the house; Graziella had done nothing but weep since my departure. She did not come to the table for her meals. She did not work at her coral. She passed every day shut up in her room without answering when she was called, and the nights she walked up and down on the terrace. It was reported in the neighborhood that she was mad; that she was *innamorata*. But Beppo knew that this was not true.

All the trouble, the child said, came because they wished her to marry Cecco and she did not want to do it. Beppino had seen it all and understood it all. Cecco's father came every day to demand an answer from the grandfather and grandmother. They never ceased tormenting poor Graziella to give her consent. But she would not allow them to speak of it even, and said that she would rather run away to Geneva. This is an expression among the Catholic people

of Naples analogous to, "I would rather turn apostate." It is a threat worse than that of suicide; it is the eternal suicide of the soul. Andrea and his wife, who adored Graziella, despaired between her resistance and the fear that they should lose this excellent chance of establishing her for life. They conjured her by their gray hairs; they talked to her of their old age, of their poverty, and of the future of the two little ones. Then Graziella would soften. She would receive poor Cecco a little better—for he still came and sat humbly during the evening at his cousin's door, playing with the children. He would bid her "Good day," and "Good bye," through the door, but she would rarely answer him with a single word. Then he would go away dissatisfied, but resigned, to come again the next day just the same.

"My sister is wrong," said Beppino; "Cecco loves her so much, and he is so good. She would be happy with him. Finally, this evening," he went on to say, "she succumbed to the

prayers of her grandfather and grandmother and to Cecco's tears. She opened her door a little way and held out her hand to him; he put a ring on one of her fingers and she promised to complete the engagement to-morrow. But who knows that to-morrow she will not have some new caprice? She, who used to be so light hearted and happy! My God! how she has changed! You would not know her!"

XII.

Beppino went to sleep in the boat. Informed as I was by him of all that had transpired, I went into the house.

Andrea and his wife were sitting alone on the astrico. They were very glad to see me again, and reproached me tenderly for having remained away so long. They went all over their trials and hopes in regard to Graziella.

"If you had been here," said Andrea, "you whom she loves so much and to whom she never says 'no,' you would have helped us

greatly. How glad we are to see you again! To-morrow the betrothal takes place; you will be present, and your presence has always brought us good fortune."

I felt a cold shiver run over my whole body at the words of these poor people. Something told me that their ill-luck came from me. I burned and I trembled to see Graziella again. I talked loud to her relatives, and passed up and down before her door like one who wished to be heard but would not call. She was deaf and dumb to all, and would not appear. I retired to my room and went to bed. There was a calm in my agitated soul which is produced by the cessation of doubt and by certainty—whatever it may be, even of evil. I fell upon the bed like a dead weight, and without moving. The weariness of mind and body brought on quickly a confused series of dreams, which was followed by the oblivion of sleep.

XIII.

At two or three different times during the night I was half awakened. It was one of those stormy winter nights more rare in the warm climates of the sea coast, but darker and more terrible than anywhere else. The lightning flashed uninterruptedly through the window blinds and shone upon the wall of my room like the winkings of a great eye of fire. The wind howled like packs of famished dogs. The dull strokes of the heavy sea, dashing up against the beach of Margellina, resounded along the shore as if they were tossing up immense rocks.

My door rattled and trembled from the force of the wind. Two or three times it seemed to me as if it opened and shut again, when I could hear stifled cries and human sobs in the plaintive wailing of the storm. At one time I thought I heard the sound of words and my own name pronounced by a voice of distress, calling upon me for help. I lifted myself on my elbow, but

heard nothing more, and believing that the storm and the fever of my dreams had deceived me, I fell back again into sleep.

In the morning the storm had given away to a clearer sun. I was awakened by real groanings and cries of despair that came from the poor fisherman and his wife who were lamenting at the threshold of Graziella's room. The poor child had gone away during the night. She had got up and kissed the children, at the same time imposing silence upon them. She had left on her bed all her best dresses, her ear-rings, her ornaments and the little money she possessed.

The father was holding in his hand a piece of paper, blotted with tears, which he had found pinned to the bed. There were but five or six lines, which, in despair, he implored me to read to him. I took the paper, and it contained only the following words written by a hand trembling with excess of fever, and which I could scarcely read :

“I have promised too much—a voice tells me

that it is more than I can fulfill. I kiss your feet. Forgive me. I prefer to become a nun. Console Cecco and the *Monsieur*. . . . I shall pray to God for him and the little ones. Give them all I have. Return the ring to Cecco."

At the reading of these lines, the whole family again burst into tears. The little children, still half-naked and waiting for their sister who had left them forever, mingled their cries with the moanings of the old people and ran through the whole house calling Graziella.

XIV.

The note fell from my hands. In stooping to pick it up, I saw just under my door a pomegranate flower, which only the Sunday before I had admired as it was fastened in the young girl's hair, and the little devotional medal which she always carried in her breast and which a few months before she had hung upon my curtain as I lay sick. I could no longer doubt that my door

had, indeed, been opened and shut during the night; that the words and suppressed sobs that I thought to hear and then had taken for the wind were the parting sobs of the poor child. A dry place just outside the entrance to my room, in the midst of the traces of rain over the rest of the terrace, showed that the young girl had stayed there during the storm, that she had passed her last hour in weeping and lamenting, crouched or kneeling on this stone. I picked up the pomegranate flower and the medal and hid them in my breast.

The poor people in the depth of their despair were touched at seeing me weep with them. I did all I could to console them. They promised that if they ever found their daughter, they would never again speak to her of Cecco. Cecco himself, whom Beppo had brought to the house, was the first to sacrifice himself to the peace of the family and the return of his cousin. All wretched as he was, I could see that he was half-happy to know that his name was tenderly men-

tioned in the note that Graziella left, and that he found a sort of consolation in the parting words that caused him his wretchedness.

“She thought of me at any rate,” he said, as he wiped his eyes.

It was then agreed between us that we would not take a minute’s rest until we had found some traces of the fugitive.

The father and Cecco went out at once to inquire at the numerous convents in the city. Beppo and the grandmother ran around among Graziella’s young friends, to whom they suspected she had confided her thoughts and flight. I, a stranger, took upon myself the task of visiting the quays, the landings in Naples and the gates of the city, to question the guards, the ship-captains, the sailors, and to find out whether any of them had seen a young Procidana going out of the city or taking a boat that morning.

The morning was passed in futile searchings. Silent and sad, we all returned to the house to tell each other of what we had done and agree

upon some plans for the future. No one except the children, had the power to carry a morsel of bread to their lips. Andrea and his wife, thoroughly discouraged, sat down at the door of Graziella's room.

Beppino and Cecco went out again to wander around, without hope, in the streets and among the churches, which are opened in the evening for the litany and benediction.

XV.

I went out alone, and after them, and by mere chance I sadly took the way that led to the grotto of Posilippo. I crossed the grotto; I went to the border of the sea that bathes the little island of Nisida.

From the shore my eyes wandered toward Procida, which shone in the distance like a tortoise-shell on the blue waves. My thoughts naturally reverted to that island and to the happy days I had passed there with Graziella. An inspiration guided me. I remembered that the

young girl had a friend there of about her own age, the daughter of a poor peasant who lived in one of the neighboring huts; that this young girl always wore a peculiar dress which differed from that of her companions; that, one day, when I questioned her as to the reason of this difference in dress, she told me that she belonged to a religious order, although she lived freely with her parents, and that hers was a sort of intermediate state between the cloister and home-life. She pointed out to me the church of her convent. There were many other orders of the same kind on the island as also in Ischia and in the villages of the country surrounding Naples.

The thought came across me immediately that Graziella, wishing to devote herself to God, would perhaps go and confide in this friend and ask her to open the gates of her convent. Before I had given myself any time for reflection, I was striding with great steps along the route to Pozzuoli, the town nearest to Procida where I could take a boat.

I arrived at Pozzuoli in less than an hour. I ran to the port; I paid a couple of boatmen double their price to induce them to take me to Procida, notwithstanding the high sea and the falling night. They launched their boat. I seized a pair of oars with them. We had some difficulty in doubling Cape Miseno, but two hours afterwards I stepped on the island, and, alone, out of breath with fatigue, and trembling, surrounded by darkness and the winter winds,—I climbed the steps of the long stairway leading to Andrea's cabin.

XVI.

“If Graziella is on the island,” I said to myself, “she will have gone there first, with the natural instinct with which the bird seeks its nest or the child the home of its father. If she has been there and is there no longer, there will be some traces of her having passed through it. These traces perhaps will lead me to where she is. But if I find neither her nor any traces of

her, all hope is lost. Then the doors of some living sepulchre have closed forever on her youth."

Troubled by this terrible thought, I reached the very last step. I knew the cleft in the rock in which the old mother, in leaving, had hidden the key of the house. I pushed aside the ivy and plunged in my hand. My fingers felt around for the key, all drawn up from fear that they would touch the cold iron which would deprive me of all hope.

The key was not there. Suppressing an outcry of joy, I entered the yard with hushed steps. The door and the shutters were closed, but a dim light escaped through the openings of the blinds, and, floating about on the fig-leaves, betrayed a lighted lamp inside. Who could have found the key, opened the door and lighted the lamp except this child of the house? I no longer doubted that Graziella was a few feet from me, and I fell on my knees at the bottom of the stairway leading into the house to thank the angel that had brought me to her.

XVII.

No sound came from the house. I leaned my ear against the door-sill; I thought I could hear a feeble noise of breathing and sobbing come from within the second room. I shook the door softly as it might have been shaken on its hinges by the force of the wind, in order to call Graziella's attention gradually, and that no sudden and unexpected sound of a human voice might frighten her and perhaps kill her by calling. The breathing was hushed. Then I called Graziella softly, with the calmest and tenderest tone that I could find in my heart. A feeble cry came from the depths of the house in answer.

I called again, conjuring her to open to her friend—her brother—who came alone during the night and in the tempest, guided by his good angel, to find her and rescue her from her despair, to bring her the forgiveness of her family, his own, and to take her back to her duty, to her happiness, to her poor grandmother and to her dear little children.

“My God! it is he! it is my name! It is his voice!” she cried.

I called again, more tenderly, “Graziellina,”—a name of endearment which I often used when we were laughing and chatting together.

“It is indeed he,” she said again. “I am not deceived; my God! it is he!”

Then I heard her raise herself upon the dry leaves that rustled under every movement, make one step toward the door and fall back again, overcome by weakness or emotion, and unable to advance any further.

XVIII.

I hesitated no longer. I leaned my shoulder against the old door and pushed it with all the force that my impatience and uneasiness gave me; the lock yielded with but little resistance and I was thrown forward into the house.

The little lamp, which Graziella had lighted before the Madonna, afforded but a feeble light. I ran into the next room, whence I had heard

the voice and fall, and where I believed that she had fainted. But she had not; her weakness had betrayed her effort; she had fallen back on the heap of dry heather which served as her bed, and there she lay, her hands joined together as she looked at me. Her eyes, sparkling with fever, widely opened with surprise and languid with love, burned fixedly like two stars, whose beams fall from heaven and which seem to look down directly at you.

Her head, which she tried to raise, fell back upon the leaves from weakness, and was so thrown over that it seemed as though her neck were broken. She was pale as death, except that her cheek-bones were tinged with the color of fresh roses. Her beautiful skin was spotted with tears in which the dust had settled. Her black dress was confused with the brown color of the leaves spread over the ground upon which she was lying. Her naked feet, white as marble, reached beyond the leaves and lay upon the stone. Cold chills ran through all her limbs

and made her teeth chatter like castanets in the hands of a child. The red handkerchief that usually held up the long black tresses of her beautiful hair was unfastened and drawn like a half-veil over her forehead and down to her eyebrows. I could see that she had used it to cover her face and tears, as if in the anticipated immobility of a shroud, and that she had only lifted it when she heard my voice, and raised herself to come and open the door.

XIX.

I threw myself down at her side and on my knees; I took both her icy hands in mine; I carried them to my lips to warm them with my breath, and tears fell down from my eyes upon them. I understood from the nervous pressure of her fingers that she felt this rain from the heart and that she was grateful for it. I took off my sailor's cloak, threw it over her bare feet, and wrapped them in its woolen folds.

She submitted to all this, following me only

with her eyes, that had an expression of happy delirium, but without being able to help me by a movement, as an infant allows itself to be bundled together and put in its cradle. I then got up and threw some dry branches on the fire-place in the front room, in order to warm the air; I lighted them from the flame of the lamp and then returned to sit down on the floor by the bed of leaves.

“How well I feel!” she said to me, speaking very softly in a sweet, even, monotonous tone, as if her breast had lost at once all vibration and accent, and had retained only a single tone of voice. “I tried in vain to conceal it from myself. I tried in vain to conceal it from you. I can die willingly, but I can love no other than you. They wished me to take a husband—you are already the husband of my soul. I will give myself to no other on earth, for I have given myself to you in secret. You on earth, and God in Heaven! Such was the vow I made when I first discovered that my heart was sick

for you. I know that I am nothing but a poor girl, unworthy to touch your feet even in thought; and I have never asked you to love me. I shall never ask whether you love me. But I love you, I love you, I love you!"

And her whole soul seemed fixed on these three words.

"And now despise me, laugh at me, trample me under your feet; mock me, if you will, as you would a mad woman who imagines herself a queen in her rags and tatters. Give me over to the ridicule of the world, and I will say to it: 'Yes, I love him, and if you had been in my place you would have loved him as I have. You would have died or you would have loved him.'"

XX.

I had held my eyes downcast, not daring to raise them to hers for fear that my glance would say too much or too little for such delirium. At these words, however, I raised my forehead

from her hands and stammered out a few incoherent sentences.

But she put her finger on my lips.

“Let me tell you all,” she continued; “I am contented now. I no longer doubt. God has explained himself. Listen: Yesterday, when I fled from the house, after having passed the whole night in struggles and weeping at your door, and when I arrived here through all the storm, I came believing I should never see you again, and was like a dead woman walking into her own grave. I was to enter the convent to-morrow at daybreak. It was night when I arrived on the island, and when I went to knock at the gates of the convent, it was too late and they were closed against me. I was refused admittance. I came here to pass the night and to kiss the walls of my father’s house before entering the house of God and the tomb of my heart. I wrote a note, which I sent to a friend by a child, asking her to come here for me in the morning. I took the key. I lighted the

little lamp before the Madonna. I knelt down and made a vow, a last vow,—a vow of hope in my very despair,—for you will know, if you ever love, that there remains always a last spark at the bottom of the soul, even when one believes all is extinguished.

“‘Holy Protectress,’ I said to her, ‘send me some sign of my vocation to assure me that love is not deceiving me, and that I really give to God a life that ought to belong to him alone.

“‘My last night among the living is already begun. No one knows where I pass it. Tomorrow, perhaps, they will come here for me, when I shall have gone. If my friend for whom I have sent comes first, let it be a sign that I must accomplish my design, and I will go with her forever to the convent.

“‘But if *he* comes before her—he, guided by my good angel, comes to find me and take me back from the confines of my other life, oh! then let that be a sign that you do not want me, and

that I shall return with him to love him all the rest of my days:

“‘And let it be he that shall come,’ I added. ‘Do this one miracle more, if it is your wish and that of God’s. To obtain this favor I will make you a gift, the only one that I, who have nothing, can make. Here is my hair, my poor, long hair, which he loves, and which he used to undo so often in sport to see it toss about in the wind on my shoulders. Take it! I give it to you. I will cut it off myself to prove to you I do not keep back any, and that my hair now shall be submitted to the shears that will cut it in the morning, if I am destined to separate myself from the world.’”

At these words she lifted with her left hand the silk handkerchief that covered her head, and with the other taking the long shorn locks of hair that had lain at her side on the bed of leaves, she unrolled it and showed it to me.

“The Madonna has done the miracle!” she exclaimed in louder accents of joy. “She has

sent you; I will go with you where you will. My hair belongs to her; my life is yours."

I threw myself upon the beautiful black tresses of hair which felt in my hands like a dead branch cut from a tree. I covered them with mute kisses, I pressed them to my heart, I bathed them in tears as if they had been a part of her whom I was burying dead in the ground. Then turning my eyes upon her, I saw her charming head, which she raised, despoiled yet adorned and embellished by the sacrifice, radiating with happiness and love amid the black and uneven locks of hair that had been torn rather than cut by the shears. She appeared to me like a mutilated statue of Youth, whose grace and beauty had been enhanced by the very ravages of time, adding pity to admiration. This profanation of herself, this suicide of her beauty for love of me, sent a shock to my heart which stunned my whole being, and I fell with my head at her feet. I surmised what it was to love, and I took this presentiment for love itself.

XXI.

Alas! it was not love in all its fullness, it was only the shadow of love in me; but I was still too young and too ingenuous not to deceive myself by it. I thought that I adored her as so much innocence, beauty and love deserved to be adored by a lover. I told her so in that sincere tone which emotion produces, and with that pent-up passion brought on by solitude, night, despair and tears. She believed it because she needed to believe it to live, and because she had passion enough in her own soul to cover up the insufficiency of a thousand other hearts.

The whole night passed in this confident, but ever artless and pure, communion of two beings who innocently reveal to each other their love, and wish the night and silence were eternal that nothing might come between their lips and hearts. Her piety and my timid reserve, the very affection of our souls, kept all danger distant from us. The veil of our tears was upon

us. There is nothing so far removed from sensuality as true affection. To abuse such an intimacy would have been to profane two souls.

I held both her hands in mine and I felt the warmth of life returning to them. I brought fresh water in the palm of my hand for her to drink, and to bathe her temples and cheeks. I kept up the fire by throwing on some more branches; then I returned and sat down on a stone near the myrtle branches on which her head rested, to listen again and again to the sweet confessions of her love: how it had sprung into life without her knowing it, in the form of a sister's pure and sweet friendship; how she was at first alarmed by it and afterwards re-assured; by what sign she finally knew that she loved me; how many secret marks of preference she had given me of which I had never thought; at what time she believed that she had betrayed her love to me; when, again, she thought that I returned it; the hours, the gestures, the smiles, the half-spoken words that were recalled, the involuntary

revelations and clouds of our features during the last six months. Her memory retained everything, as the mountain grass of the South which has caught fire in the Summer retains the imprint in all places where the flames have passed.

XXII.

To these confessions she added the mysterious superstitions of love, which give a meaning and a value to the most insignificant circumstances. One by one she raised before me, so to speak, all the veils that covered her soul. She showed herself as to God, in all the nakedness of her candor, childhood and trust. There is but one moment in life when the soul empties itself into another soul, with the never-ceasing murmur of the lips which are not equal to the loving outpourings of the heart, and which finish only by stammering inarticulate and confused sounds like the kisses of a babe that is falling asleep.

I did not cease to listen, to tremble and to feel the chills run through me alternately. Although

my heart was yet too young and too light, neither ripe enough nor fertile enough to produce of itself such burning and divine emotions, yet these emotions, falling from another heart into mine, made an impression so novel and so delicious that in feeling them I believed that I experienced them myself. Fatal error! I was the mirror and she was the fire. In reflecting that fire, I believed I produced it. No matter. This radiance reflected from one to the other seemed to belong to us both, and to enfold us in the same atmosphere of love.

XXIII.

It was in this way that the long winter night passed. But that night, for Graziella and for me, had only the duration of the first sigh of love. It seemed to us, when day appeared, that it came to break in upon a sentence that was scarcely begun.

Yet the sun was already high in the heavens before its rays entered the closed blinds and

paled the light of the lamp. At the very moment I opened the door, I saw the whole of the old fisherman's family running up the stairway.

The young nun of Procida, Graziella's friend, to whom she had sent the message of the evening before, confiding her intention of entering the convent on the morrow, suspected that the cause was some despair of the heart, and had sent, during the night, one of her brothers to Naples to inform the family of Graziella's resolution. Knowing where to find their child, they came in haste, all joyous and repentant, to stop her at the very confines of despair, and bring her back with them free and forgiven.

The grandmother fell on her knees near the bed, and held out in her arms the two little children, whom they had brought to soften Graziella's heart, covering her with their bodies as if with a shield against her reproaches. The children, weeping and screaming, jumped into their sister's arms. In raising herself to caress

them and to kiss her grandmother, Graziella dropped the handkerchief from her head and exposed her head shorn of its hair. They all shuddered at the sight of this outrage on her beauty, the meaning of which they understood too well, and burst out again into sobs which filled the house. The nun, who had just come in, brought them all consolation. She picked up the tresses that had been cut from Graziella's head, touched them to the image of the Madonna, then wrapped them carefully in a white silk handkerchief, and threw them into the grandmother's lap.

"Keep them," said she, "to show her from time to time, in her happiness or in her sorrow, and to remind her when she belongs to him whom she loves, that the first fruits of her heart should always be given to God, as these first offerings of her beauty were given to him."

XXIV.

That afternoon we all went back to Naples together. The zeal which I had shown in finding

and saving Graziella in this case only served to increase the affection which the old fisherman and his wife entertained for me. Neither of them suspected the nature of my interest in her, or of her attachment for me. They believed that all her repugnance for Cecco arose from his deformity. They hoped to overcome this repugnance by time and reason. They promised Graziella that they would not press her to the marriage. Cecco himself besought his father not to speak of it again, and in his humility of looks and bearing he begged his cousin's pardon that he had been the cause of all her trouble. And peace once more came into the humble house.

XXV.

There was now nothing to cast a single shadow over Graziella's face or our happiness, unless it was the thought that this happiness must sooner or later be broken off by my return to my native country. When any one mentioned the name of

France, the poor girl turned as pale as if she had seen the ghost of death.

One day, when I went into my room, I found my city clothes torn into pieces and scattered about the floor.

“O forgive me!” cried Graziella, as she fell on her knees at my feet, and turned her troubled face up to mine. “I did it all, but do not scold me. Every thing that reminds me that some day you are going to throw off your sailor’s dress gives me too much pain! It seems to me as though you are tearing out your heart of to-day to make place for another when you put on the clothes that you used to wear.”

With the exception of such little outbursts as these, which flashed from the warmth of her affection and which were quieted by our tears, three months passed in an imaginary bliss which the slightest touch of reality would have dissipated. Our Eden rested upon a cloud.

And this was the way I learned to love — from the tear of a child’s eye.

XXVI.

How happy were we together when we could forget entirely that there was any other world outside of us, any other world but that little house at the declivity of Mount Posilippo; that terrace in the sun; that little room in which we worked and played together half the day; that boat lying in its bed of sand on the beach, and that beautiful sea, whose soft and melodious breezes brought to us the freshness and music of its waters.

But, alas! there were moments when we were conscious that the world did not stop there, and that, one day, it would raise itself and find us no longer together under the rays of the same sun or moon.

I am wrong in accusing my heart so much for its dryness by comparing it with what it has felt since. In reality, I began to love Graziella a thousand times better than I admitted to myself. If I did not love her so much, why should the

traces, which have remained in my soul during my whole life, be so deep and doleful, and why should I cherish her memory so dearly and regretfully? Her likeness would not be so constantly before me, in all its beauty, if this had not been love. My heart was still of sand, yet this sea-flower grew upon it for more than one season, like those wonderful lilies that live and prosper on the beach of Ischia.

XXVII.

And what eye so void of light, what heart so still-born as not to have loved her? Her beauty seemed to develop with her love from night to morning. She did not grow much larger, but her natural grace became more refined—grace of the child yesterday, to-day the grace of the woman. Her slight form was changed into a somewhat rounder and sweeter one of adolescence. Her pretty bare feet no longer stole softly over the trodden ground, but were dragged along with that indolence and languor which the weight of love's

first thoughts seems to impress upon a woman's whole being.

Her hair grew thick and strong with the vigor of sea-plants under the warm waves of spring-time. I often amused myself by measuring its growth in stretching the locks, rolled around my fingers, over the laced waist of her green sack. At the same time that her skin whitened, it became tinted with the color of the rose-powder from the coral which always covered the ends of her fingers. Her eyes grew larger and fuller from day to day, as if to embrace a new horizon that had suddenly appeared before her. It was that wonder of life—Galatea feeling her first palpitation under the marble. She assumed unconsciously before me a reserve and a modesty in her looks, actions and bearing which she had never shown toward me before. And I noticed it, and I myself was all silent and trembling when near her. One would have said that we were two criminals, while we were but two happy children.

Yet for some time back a deep melancholy was hidden or revealed itself under all this happiness. We did not know why it was so, but fate knew it. It was the feeling of the short time left for us to be together.

XXVIII.

It often happened that Graziella, instead of going gladly to her work, after having dressed and combed her little brothers, would remain seated at the foot of the wall which supported the terrace, in the shade of the great leaves of a fig-tree that reached from the ground to the very top of the wall. There she would sit motionless, with a vacant stare in her eyes, for whole hours at a time. When her grandmother would ask her if she were sick, she would answer that she was not sick, but that she was already tired out before beginning her work. At such a time she did not like to be questioned. She turned her face from every one except me, and she would look at me a long time without

saying a word. At times her lips moved as if she had been speaking, but she muttered words that no one heard. I could see rapid changes of color, from white to red, and from red to white again, suffuse her cheeks and make the skin appear like a placid, sleeping sheet of water ruffled by the first breath of the morning wind. But when I sat down by her side and took her hand in mine, and gently drew the feathers of my quill-pen or a sprig of rosemary over her closed eye-lids, she would forget everything and begin to laugh and talk with me as of old. But she seemed sad after playing and laughing.

I sometimes said to her :

“Graziella, what is it that you look at for so many hours together over there, so far out in the sea? Can you see anything there that we can not see?”

“I see France beyond those mountains of ice,” she would answer me.

“And what do you find so fascinating in France?” I asked again.

“I see some one that resembles you; some one that walks, and walks, and walks on a long white road that has no end. He walks always, always straight ahead, and never turning round. I wait for hours, hoping always that he may turn to retrace his steps, but he never does, he never does.”

And then she would hide her face in her apron, and all the endearing names I could call her would not induce her to raise her head.

I would then go sadly into my own room. I would try to read in order to divert my thoughts, but I always saw Graziella's beautiful face between my eyes and the page before me. It seemed as though the words took a voice, and sobbed like our two hearts. It often ended in my weeping all alone; but I was ashamed of my low spirits, and never told Graziella that I had wept. I was wrong. One such tear of mine would have brought so much joy to her heart!

XXIX.

I remember well the scene that gave her more heart-pain than all the rest; from which, indeed, she never recovered fully.

Sometime before this she had formed an intimacy with two or three young girls of about her own age. These young girls lived in one of the little houses in the adjoining gardens. They ironed or repaired the clothes of some young French girls who were attending a boarding school in the neighborhood. The king Murat had founded this institution at Naples for the daughters of his ministers and generals. These young Procidane often talked with Graziella as she looked over the terrace wall while they worked below. They showed her the beautiful lace, the beautiful silks, the beautiful hats, the beautiful shoes, the beautiful ribbons and the beautiful shawls which they brought from the convent or carried back to the young ladies. There were incessant outcries of surprise and admiration.

At times these sewing girls would come for Graziella to take her to mass or to hear the music at vespers in the little chapel at Posilippo. At twilight I would go to meet them, when I heard the bells giving warning of the priest's benediction. As we returned we would loiter and play on the beach, following the traces left by the retreating wave, and running before the surge as it came toward our feet with the white cap of foam.

How handsome Graziella was at such a time! Fearing to wet her shining slippers, spangled with gold, she would run toward me with outstretched arms, as if to take refuge in my heart against the amorous wave that sought to clasp her, or at least to kiss her little feet.

XXX.

I noticed for some time that there was something in Graziella's thoughts which she concealed from me. She had secret interviews with her young friends, the sewing girls. It was like a

little conspiracy into the secrets of which I was not admitted.

One evening I was reading in my room by the feeble light of my little earthen lamp. My door which led out upon the terrace was open to admit the breeze from the sea. I heard a confused noise; long whisperings of young girls; suppressed laughter; impatient exclamations; repeated sounds of voices interrupted by long intervals of silence, which came from the room where Graziella and the children slept. At first I paid but little attention to it.

Yet the very efforts that were made to hush the whisperings and the mystery indicated by such efforts finally excited my curiosity. I laid down my book; I took my earthen lamp in my left hand, and with my right hand protected the flame from the wind that it might not be extinguished. I crossed the terrace with hushed steps, gliding along the flagstones. I leaned my ear against Graziella's door. I heard the noise of feet coming and going in the room, the

rustling of silks folding and unfolding, the sharp click of thimbles, needles and scissors, of women adjusting ribbons and pinning capes, and the renewed buzzing and murmuring of voices,—such sounds as I had often heard at home when my sisters were dressing for a ball.

I knew that there was no festival nor celebration at Posilippo on the following day. Graziella had never dreamed of enhancing her beauty by the arts of the toilette. Indeed there was not even a looking-glass in her room. She never looked at herself except in the clear water of the well, or rather she never looked at herself except in my eyes.

My curiosity could no longer resist this mystery. I pushed the door with my knee. It yielded. I appeared, my lamp in my hand, upon the threshold.

The young sewing-girls cried and flew away, like frightened birds, or as if they had been discovered in the commission of some criminal act, to the furthest corners of the room. They still

held in their hands the different articles that convicted them,—one the thread, another the scissors, this one flowers and that one ribbons. But Graziella, standing in the middle of the room upon a little wooden stool, and as if turned into stone by an unexpected apparition, could not escape. Her cheeks were red as a pomegranate. She lowered her eyes, she could not look at me, she could hardly breathe. Every one was silent, waiting to hear what I would say. But I said nothing; I was overcome with surprise and stood in mute contemplation of the scene before me.

Graziella had taken off her garments of heavy wool; the sack laced behind after the fashion of Procida, and open in front, that the maiden may breathe freely and that the mother may give the child its nourishment; her slippers with the golden spangles and wooden heels, which usually encased her naked feet; the long pins with their large brass heads, around which her hair was rolled, as a sail is wrapped about a yard; and

her ear-rings, as big as bracelets, which were thrown upon the bed with her dress.

In place of this picturesque Grecian costume, which is becoming to poverty as well as riches, and which gives, in the skirt falling just below the knee, in the sloping of the corsage and in the flowing sleeves, a freedom to all the members of the body, Graziella's young friends, at her own request, had dressed her in the garments and ornaments of a French girl of about her size who was living at the convent. She had on a dress of watered silk, a rose-colored belt, a white neckerchief, artificial flowers in her hair, blue satin slippers and silk stockings that exposed a flesh color on her well-rounded ankles.

She stood in this costume in which I had surprised her, as confused as if she had been surprised in nakedness by a man. I looked at her without being able to take my eyes from her, but without expressing by word, action or smile the feeling which I experienced at seeing her in this disguise. There was a tear in my

heart. I had understood instantly and too well the young girl's thought. Ashamed of the difference between her condition in life and mine, she had desired to find out whether a nearer approach to the fashions of my country in dress would, in my eyes, bring about a nearer approach of our destinies. She had prepared the experiment without my knowledge and with the assistance of her friends, hoping to appear suddenly before me handsomer and nearer to me than she thought herself to be in her simple island dress. But she had deceived herself. She began to perceive it in my silence. Her face took an expression of desperate impatience and she nearly burst into tears at my discovery of her hidden purpose, her deception, her crime.

She was still very beautiful, and her intention should have enhanced her beauty a thousand times in my eyes. But that beauty was almost like a torture. She resembled one of Correggio's young virgins nailed to the martyr's stake, twisting about in the cords that bound them to avoid

the looks that defiled their chastity. Alas! it was a martyrdom for poor Graziella too; but not as one might have thought at seeing her, a martyrdom of vanity — it was the martyrdom of her love.

The clothes of the young French school girl, cut undoubtedly for the lank waist and thin arms and shoulders of a girl of thirteen or fourteen years who had been shut up in the house all her life, were much too small for the well developed form and rounded shoulders, strongly riveted upon the body, of this charming daughter of the sun and sea. The dress had burst out in several places, at the shoulders, at the bosom, around the waist, like the bark of a sycamore that is torn from the branches of the tree by the force of its spring sap. The sewing girls had tried to pin the dress and the cape here and there, but nature had torn the stuff at every movement. In several spots I could see the girl's bare neck through the holes in the silk, and her bare arms under the patches. The

coarse stuff of her undergarment bulged out through the cape and dress, and its rude texture contrasted strangely with the elegance of the silk. The arms, ill at ease in the short, tight sleeves, came out like the butterfly from its chrysalis as it swells and bursts. Her feet, usually naked, and accustomed to large Grecian shoes, stretched the satin slippers which seemed to imprison them with their tightly drawn strings, giving them the appearance of sandals on her limbs. Her hair, badly dressed and badly kept in its place with its confusion of lace and false flowers, raised of itself this whole structure of coiffure, and, while it failed to disfigure her lovely face, it gave her an expression of boldness in the ornaments and of modest reserve in her features that formed the strangest but most delightful contrast.

Her attitude was as embarrassed as her features; she did not dare to move from fear of dropping the flowers from her head, or of disarranging her dress. She could not walk, for her

slippers were so tight as to make her steps charmingly awkward. One would have said that she was the artless Eve of this sea of sun, caught in the trap of her first coquetry.

XXXI.

The whole room was hushed for a moment. Then, more pained than rejoiced at this profanation of nature, I went toward Graziella with an expression half mocking and half reproachful, making believe that I could scarcely recognize her in this elaborate costume.

“What!” I exclaimed. “Is it you, Graziella? and who in the world would ever have known the lovely Procidana in this Parisian doll? Come now,” I went on, a little more sharply, “are you not ashamed to have disfigured in this way that which God has made so beautiful in a natural dress? You will try in vain, Graziella. You will never be anything but the daughter of the waves, adorned by rays from your own splendid heaven. You must resign yourself to it, and

you should thank God for it. This plumage of the caged bird will never be adapted to the sea-swallow."

These words pierced her to the heart. She did not understand that I felt a passionate preference, almost an adoration, for this sea-swallow. She thought that all her efforts to appear more beautiful for my sake and deceive my eyes in regard to her humble station had been thrown away. Suddenly she burst out into tears, and, sitting down on the bed, she hid her face in her hands and begged in a pouting tone that her young friends would come and take off the hateful ornaments.

"I knew," said she, sighing and sobbing, "that I was nothing but a poor Procidana, but I believed that, if I changed my dress, you would not be ashamed of me some day if I should follow you into your native country. I see now that I must always remain as I am, and die as I was born. But you should not have reproached me with it."

With these words, she tore off in contempt the flowers, the lace cap and the cape, and threw them in anger upon the floor, where she trampled them under her feet, muttering some such words of reproach as her grandmother had spoken to the planks of the wrecked boat. Then jumping toward me, she blew out the light of the lamp I was holding so that I might not see her any longer in the dress which had displeased me.

I felt that I had been wrong in speaking so sharply to her, and that the mockery was serious. I begged for pardon. I told her that I had scolded her only because I found her a thousand times more charming in the costume of Procida than that of France. It was true, but the blow had been struck. She would not hear me; she would do nothing but sob.

I went out; her friends took off the dress and I saw no more of her till the next morning. She had resumed her island costume, but her eyes were red with tears that my mocking had cost her through the entire night.

XXXII.

About the same time Graziella began to distrust the letters which I received from France, suspecting, and rightly, that they called me home. She would not destroy them, for she was too honest, and indeed incapable of such a deception, if her life depended on it, but she sometimes kept them from me for nine days at a time, fastening them with her little gilded hairpins behind the image of the Madonna that hung on the wall by the side of her bed. She thought that the Holy Virgin, touched by the offerings of our love, would in some miraculous way change the contents of the letters and translate the orders to return into permission to remain with her. Not one of these devoted little deceptions escaped my notice and all of them rendered her dearer to me than ever. But the hour was approaching.

XXXIII.

One evening in the latter part of May there was a violent knocking at the door. All of the

family were asleep and I went to open it. It was my friend V——.

“I have come for you,” he said. “Here is a letter from your mother. You will not resist it. I have ordered the horses for midnight. It is now eleven o’clock. Let us go now or you will never leave this place. You are killing your mother. You know how your family holds her responsible for all your faults. She has sacrificed herself so often for you; sacrifice yourself a moment for her. I swear to you that I will come back with you to this place and spend the winter, another long year. But you must make an appearance in your family and a sign of obedience to your mother’s commands.”

I felt that I was lost.

“Wait for me here,” I said to him.

I went back into my room and hastily threw my clothes into the valise. I wrote to Graziella all that the affection of a heart of eighteen years could express; all that my reason could dictate to a son devoted to his mother. I swore to her,

as indeed I swore to myself, that before four months passed I would be by her side, never again to leave her. I confided the uncertainty of our future destiny to Providence and to love. I left my purse which might assist the family during my absence. The letter closed, I approached her room with hushed steps. I got down on my knees at the threshold of her door, I kissed the stone and wood. I slipped the letter into her room under the door, I stifled a sob that nearly choked me.

My friend passed his arm through mine, lifted me and dragged me away. At this moment, Graziella, alarmed no doubt by the unaccustomed noise, opened the door. The moon lighted up the terrace. The poor girl recognized my friend. She saw my valise which a servant was carrying away. She reached out her arms, cried out in terror, and fell senseless to the ground.

We rushed to her. We carried her, still unconscious, to her bed. The whole family ran into the room. Water was thrown upon her face

and she was called by all the names that had been dearest to her. She only came to herself at my voice.

“You see,” said my friend to me, “she lives. The blow has been given. A longer parting would only bring on a more terrible rebound.”

He took the young girl's two cold arms from around my neck and dragged me out of the house. An hour later we were rolling in silence and the night along the road to Rome.

XXXIV.

I had left Graziella several addresses in the letter I had written her. I received her first letter at Milan. It told me that she was well bodily, but sick at heart; but that she believed in my promise and confidently awaited my return in November.

When I arrived at Lyons I found a second letter, that was written still more resignedly and trustfully. There were also enclosed some leaves of the carnation pink that grew in an

earthen flower-pot on the terrace walk near my room, and from which she took a flower every Sunday to put in her hair. Did she send me these leaves that I might have something which she had touched? Or was it a gentle reproach disguised under this sign, and sent to remind me that she had sacrificed her hair for me?

She told me that she had had the fever; that her heart gave her pain, but that she was getting better from day to day; that she had been sent, for a change of air, and that she might recover perfectly, to a cousin of hers, Cecco's sister, whose house was at Vomero, a high and healthful hill looking over Naples.

Then it was more than three months that I did not receive another letter. I thought of Graziella every day. I was to return to Italy in the beginning of the Winter. Her sad and lovely likeness haunted me like a regret and sometimes like a tender reproach. I was at that ungrateful age when the spirit of levity and fashion makes a young man ashamed of the best sentiments of

his soul, a cruel age when the grandest gifts of God — pure love, innocent affections — fall in the dust and are carried away in their bloom by the wind of the world. The false and ironic pride of my friends often struggled hard against the latent but living love in the depths of my heart. I could not have avowed, without blushing and exposing myself to ridicule, the name and condition of the object of my regret and sadness. Graziella was not forgotten but she was lost from sight in that life of mine. This love which fascinated my heart humiliated my vanity. Her memory, which I cherished in my solitude, followed me into society like a remorse. How I blush now that I blushed then! A single ray of joy or a single drop of water from her chaste eyes was worth more than all the glances, smiles and allurements to which I was ready to sacrifice her memory. Ah! The young man is incapable of love. He knows the value of nothing. He can not appreciate true happiness until after he has lost it. There is more wild sap,

more fluttering shade in the young plants of the forest; there is more fire in the old heart of the oak.

True love is the ripe fruit of the lifetime. At eighteen years one does not know it; one only imagines it. As in the vegetable nature, when the fruit comes, the leaves fall, so perhaps it is in human nature. I have often thought it since I have been able to count the gray hairs in my head. Oh, how I have blamed myself for not appreciating the worth of that lovely flower! I was nothing but vanity, and vanity is more silly and more cruel than vice, for it makes happiness blush.

XXXV.

On one of the first nights of November, as I returned home from a ball, a letter was given me, along with a package, brought to the house by a traveler from Naples, while changing horses in Macon. The traveler, who was a stranger to me, said in his letter that he had been charged with this little commission by one of his friends,

the director of a coral factory in Naples, and he took the first opportunity of delivering it; but that, the news which he brought being sad and dismal, he would not ask to see me; he wished, however, that I would acknowledge its receipt at Paris.

Trembling, I opened the bundle. It enclosed under the first wrapper Graziella's last letter, which contained but these words:

“The doctor tells me that I shall die before three days. I wish to say farewell to you before I lose all my strength. Oh, if you were here, I should live! But it is God's will, and I will talk with you soon and ever after from the heaven above. Love my soul, for it will be with you throughout life. I leave you the hair cut for you one night. Consecrate it to God in a chapel of your own country, that something of me may be near you.”

XXXVI.

I remained crushed, the letter in my hand, until morning. It was only then that I had the

strength to open the second paper. All her beautiful hair was there, as she had shown it to me on the memorable night in the island cabin. It was still entangled with some of the leaves which had clung to it that night. I did what she had ordered. The shadow of her death was from that day cast over my face and my youth.

Twelve years later I returned to Naples. I looked for traces of her, but there were none to be found, either at Margellina or at Procida. The little house on the cliff of the island had fallen into ruins. There remained nothing of it but a heap of gray stones, which covered a cellar for the goatherds and their goats during the rains. Time quickly blots out all material traces, but it never blots out the traces of a first love in the heart it has visited.

Poor Graziella! Many, many days have gone by since then. I have loved and been beloved. Other rays of beauty and affection have lighted up my dark way. Other souls have been opened to me and revealed in the hearts of women the

most mysterious treasures of beauty, holiness and purity which God ever placed upon this earth to make us feel, comprehend, and desire the blessings of heaven. But nothing has effaced thy first impression upon my heart. The longer I live the nearer I approach thee in thought. Thy memory is like those fires of thy father's boat, which in the distance are separated from their smoke, and which shine the more brilliant as they recede. I know not where sleep thy mortal remains, nor if any one in thy own country still weeps over thy grave; but thy real sepulchre is in my heart. It is there that thou art gathered and cherished entire. Thy name is never heard in vain. I love the language in which it is pronounced. At the bottom of my heart there is a tear that is ever dropping, dropping, and secretly falls on thy memory to keep it fresh; to embalm it within me.

XXXVII.

One day, in the year 1830, having gone into a church in Paris, I saw them bring a coffin,

covered with a white cloth and containing the remains of a young girl. This coffin reminded me of Graziella. I glided into the shade of one of the columns. I dreamed of Procida and I wept a long time.

My tears dried up, but the clouds that came across my thoughts during this sad funeral service, will never vanish. I returned to my room in silence. I unfolded the reminiscences that are retraced in this long note, and I wrote at one sitting, weeping the while, the verses entitled, "The First Regret." It is the echo of a heart-beat, toned down by the distance of twenty years, that caused the first spring to gush forth; but one may still discover the trembling of a fibre, wounded then, never to be fully cured.

Here are the verses—the balm of a wound, the dew of a heart, the perfume of a sepulchral flower. The name of Graziella alone is wanting. I would insert it in a verse if there were here below a crystal pure enough to hold this tear, this souvenir, this name.

THE FIRST REGRET.

Near the sounding shore of Sorrento's sea,
Where the blue waves roll to the orange tree,
In a narrow way by the blossoming hedge,
Stands a little stone by the water's edge,—
A tomb it scarce can be !

Yet a wall-flower there a name conceals,
A name that no echoes ever resound,
And a parting branch to the eye reveals
The age and date of the lost and found ;
And the stranger will say, with a tear in his eye,
"She was only sixteen—It was early to die."

But why drag my soul to scenes that are o'er?
Let the waves murmur, the weary winds sigh,
Come back, sad thoughts, to the present hour,
I would not weep, but dream for aye.

"She was only sixteen," and that sweet age
Never smiled upon lovelier heritage ;
And never before to human sight
Reflected the water an eye more bright ;

Now her image is with me, fair to my eye
As a thought on the mind where nothing can die.
And she lives as when, with her liquid eyes,
She gazed my soul into paradise ;
And when the light breeze through her dark hair
 strayed,
And the sail's cool shade with her fair cheek played ;
When she listened to hear the fisherman's song
Which the balmy sea wind wafted along ;
And pointing to the waning moon forlorn—
A night-flower surprised by the coming morn—
And to th' silvery waves, she would say to me :
" What means this glitter upon the sea ?
These fields of azure and flames on high,
These sands of gold where the waves all die,
These hill-tops that tremble against the sky,
These heights where the silent forests lie,
These crested waves and the lights on shore ?
They have ravished my senses never before.
Never before have I dreamed as to-night :
Is't a star in my soul that is shedding this light ?
Say, son of the morning, are these nights, so grand,
Like those without me in thy native land ?"
On her mother's knee she reclined her head,
For her mother was near when this was said.

But why drag my soul to scenes that are o'er?
Let the waves murmur, the weary winds sigh!
Come back, sad thoughts, to the present hour,
I would not weep, but dream for aye.

How frank was her mouth and her eye how bright!
Heaven steeped her soul in its dreamy light;
The Lake of Nemi, unstirred by the wind,
Was less transparent than was her mind.
When the thoughts of her soul to her lips would rise,
Her lids never closed on her downcast eyes,
Nor veiled her beauty and gentle grace,
Nor the glow of innocence on her face;
All was joy to her, and a youthful smile
Sat happily over her mouth the while,
Like a rainbow in a brilliant sky
That blooms and then is doomed to die.
Over her face no shadow lay,
No cloud of darkness dimmed its ray;
Her step, so wayward and careless always,
Like a wave that cradles the sleeping day,
Was happy and free; and the silvery roll
Of her voice was the echo of her soul,
And this song of the soul, where all was song,
Gladdened the air as it floated along

But why drag my soul to scenes that are o'er?
Let the waves murmur, the weary winds sigh!
Come back, sad thoughts, to the present hour,
I would not weep, but dream for aye.

As the eye first catches the morning beams,
My image was first in her heart of dreams.
From that day on, about and above,
The world was a universe of love.
She mingled her beautiful being with mine,
And I to her soul was the sacred shrine
Of th' enchanted world to which she had given
All the joy of earth and the hope of Heaven.
She gave no thought to time or space,
The present was her resting place;
With me her life was without a past,
With me no future its shadow cast;
To nature she gave herself entire,
That did smile on us and the prayer inspire
At the altar,—to which bright flowers she brought,—
Not in tears but gladly sought.
She led me to this holy altar,
And like a child did I tremble and falter,
While she whispered low: "Come pray with me,
I can not reach Heaven itself without thee."

But why drag my soul to scenes that are o'er?
Let the waves murmur, the weary winds sigh!
Come back, sad thoughts, to the present hour,
I would not weep, but dream for aye.

From a living source comes this water transparent,
So like a rounded lake having no current;
Blue and serene, and shaded all day
From the wind's blighting breath and the sun's scorch-
ing ray;
A white swan swimming on the placid bay,
Hiding its neck where the ripples play,
Adorns the mirror without dimming its light,
Rocking itself with the stars of the night.
But beating the wave with wings so white,
To other waters it takes its flight;
Then the Heavens are lost in the ruffled wave,
Dimmed by the motion its plumage gave,
As if the vulture, foe of the bird,
With traces of death the surface had blurred;
And the brilliant blue of the enchanted lake
Is lost in the hue the sanded waters take.

So trembled her soul when I went away:
Its light died out and the flickering ray

Fled back to Heaven no more to shine,
She awaited not return of mine,
She languished not in the doubt of hope,
Sought not with her cruel fate to cope :
She drained at a draught her cup of woe,
She drowned her heart in the first tear's flow ;
And, like the bird, less pure and light,
That folds its head under its wing at night,
She wrapped herself in mute despair
And fell asleep ere the night was there.

But why drag my soul to scenes that are o'er ?
Let the waves murmur, the weary winds sigh
Come back, sad thoughts, to the present hour,
I would not weep, but dream for aye.

These fifteen years has she been asleep,
And over her grave no mourners weep,
And oblivion, second shroud of the dead,
Has covered the way to her lowly bed.
No one visits this slab of gray,
None ever dream there, none ever pray ;
But following the flood of days gone by
I summon the past with a heavy sigh,
And fond memories swelling my heart of cares,
I weep in a heaven of fallen stars ;

But she was the first and fairest of all,
And her light illumines my bosom's pall.

But why drag my soul to scenes that are o'er?
Let the waves murmur, the weary winds sigh!
Come back, sad thoughts, to the present hour,
I would not weep, but dream for aye.

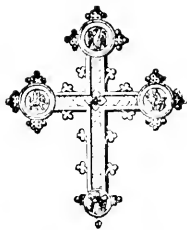
A thorny bush, all blasted and seared,
Is the only monument nature has reared;
Scorched by the sun and riven by the wind,
Like a funeral regret fixed in the mind,—
It lives in a rock by no shade brightened,
Its withered leaves by the road-dust whitened;
It grows near the ground, and the broken stocks
Are nibbled close by the goatherd's flocks.
A bird of sweet and sorrowful tones
Sits on a bending branch and laments.
In springtime a flower may bloom a day,
But like a snowflake it is swept away—
Blasted before its fragrance is spread,
Like life ere the heart by love is led;
Oh, tell me, flower, in this, thy day of doom,
Is there no world where all again will bloom?

Now go, weary soul, to scenes that are past,
And come back, sad memories, help me to sigh!
And thoughts, ye may follow my soul at last,
I would not dream, but weep for aye.

In these written tears alone have I expiated the hardness and ingratitude of my heart of eighteen years. I can never read over these verses without adoring that youthful image which the transparent and plaintive waves of the Gulf of Naples will ever bring to me,—nor without hating myself. But souls above forgive. Hers has forgiven me. Forgive me, too, reader, for I have wept.

THE END.





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